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Free to Deployed Areas

RISKY BUSINESS

Hostage killings drive US toward dangerous rescue missions by special operations forces

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A Navy SEAL participates in a training exercise.

Courtesy of U.S. Naval Special Warfare

Russia's economic crisis could push Putin to lash out

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany—After riding high as the conqueror of Crimea, Russian President Vladimir Putin now looks like he could be on the ropes, reeling from the collapse of oil prices, Western sanctions and a free-falling ruble that have thrust Moscow into crisis.

The question now vexing security analysts is whether Russia's economic crisis will force Putin away from the type of aggressive

moves carried out in Ukraine this year or push him into a corner from which he could lash out in unexpected ways to protect his power base.

ANALYSIS

"My concern is the unpredictability and potential for miscalculation, because you have so many gray areas now around Russia, which during the Cold War we really didn't have," said Stephen Szabo, an expert with the George Marshall Fund of the United States in Washington.

"I think there is a real risk he will again try to use some kind of diversion to divert attention away from home and use nationalism as he has done in Ukraine. I think it is a very dangerous time."

Stephen Szabo

George Marshall Fund of the United States

"During the Cold War, there was a Communist Party and collective leadership. Today, it appears to be an unpredictable system

that is based off the personality of one individual."

The band of former Soviet states between Russia and NATO's east-

ern flank includes Moldova and Georgia — where Russian troops currently maintain a presence in separatist regions — which are among the potential flashpoints ripe for miscalculation between Moscow and the West, experts say.

"I think there is a real risk he will again try to use some kind of diversion to divert attention away from home and use nationalism as he has done in Ukraine," Szabo said. "I think it is a very dangerous time."

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Islamic State captures Arab pilot after plane shot down in Syria

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Multitasking is all in a day's work for actor Benedict Cumberbatch

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's just wrong, when you remove baby Jesus two days before Christmas and put Satan in his place — that just can't happen. I couldn't allow it to happen."

— Susan Hemeryck, who was arrested Tuesday when she tried to remove a display showing an angel falling into flames with the message "Happy Holidays from the Satanic Temple" from Florida's Capitol

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5. German journalist: 'Guy from New Jersey' fighting for Islamic State

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Shifting Gears

First US-built Mercedes is good on mileage, but not on controls

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MILITARY

Turnover undercuts VA hiring spree

"My thinking was, 'I can't work in this environment for 20 years, so why stay here?'"
nurse who left the Puget Sound VA in Washington state after two years

By ADAM ASHTON
AND HAL BERNTON
The (Tacoma, Wash.) News Tribune

Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System is pushing to hire more doctors, therapists and other employees to cope with a growing patient load that has strained staff and contributed to frustrating health care delays for military veterans.

That effort is starting to show some success.

As of November, the overall vacancy rate for nurses, a key hospital position, was 6 percent, compared with nearly 16 percent in June. Many other open positions in other fields also are drawing strong interest.

"We see record higher numbers of applicants applying for all of our jobs," said Julie Wilkerson, director of human resources at VA Puget Sound.

But the VA's challenges extend beyond recruiting and hiring; administrators also must retain these employees once they're on the payroll.

Nationally, the VA loses up to 32 percent of all new hires within the first five years of employment, and more than 20 percent of doctors and nurses drop out within their first two years on the job, according to a VA strategic plan document released earlier this year.

Last year, 10 primary care physicians at the American Lake Division in Lakewood, Wash., departed, worsening a backlog in care and leading the VA to postpone patient appointments.

Low job satisfaction and morale may be one factor driving turnover. VA Puget Sound has scored poorly on job satisfaction, satisfaction with the organization and nurse turnover compared with other VA networks, according to quarterly internal reviews.

Though VA officials cite retirements as a major cause of turnover, some former medical staff say the demands of the job can take a big toll.

"I loved every job I ever had, but I just burned out at the VA," said Bruce Buchanan, a physician who until 2010 supervised doctors and nurses at the American Lake Division VA.

Buchanan had worked for the VA for a decade, and said he relished working with veteran pa-

tients. But he grew frustrated in his dealings with administrators, whom he said delayed the hiring of new staff.

Other former employees also cite battles with bureaucracy that eventually wore them down.

"There is so much more red tape that they circle around 10 or 20 times before they solve something," said a nurse who left the Puget Sound VA after two years on the job. "My thinking was, 'I can't work in this environment for 20 years, so why stay here?'"

With high turnover and long lead times on hiring, it can be tough to replace staff as fast as they leave. This past year, VA Puget Sound made 304 hires but saw 325 workers retire or resign.

Meanwhile, the numbers of veterans seeking care keeps increasing. VA Puget Sound — with major hubs in Seattle and American Lake and seven clinics around Western Washington — ranks as one of the department's fastest-growing health care networks. During the past year, the staff provided care for 97,000 patients, which is 4,000 more than in 2013 and 30,000 more than in 2007.

Administrators forecast more years of growth as aging Vietnam veterans seek more care and more Iraq and Afghanistan veterans enter the system. By 2018, the VA Puget Sound expects to have about 110,000 patients in its network.

Staffing fuels scandals

The recruiting drive at VA Puget Sound is part of a broader effort by the Department of Veterans Affairs to fill positions and improve access.

VA Secretary Bob McDonald, in congressional testimony in September, estimated that some 28,000 new hires are needed across the country to catch up with backlogs in health care. He also singled out staff shortages as a factor in the scandals over the past year as staff in Phoenix manipulated wait lists to try to mask the extent of wait times.

"Demand outstripped supply. This contributed to an environment that led to violations of our mission and our values," McDon-

Congress last summer set aside \$5 billion to hire more VA medical staff and help the department make more competitive offers.

Local recruiters do have some strong selling points. The Puget Sound region is viewed by many medical personnel as an attractive region. Though the VA is not a pay leader in the industry, the department can offer a solid benefits package and pitch the opportunity for research and service to veterans.

But in Western Washington, medical professionals have plenty of other options for employment.

Job vacancies decline

VA officials say they have made substantial progress filling vacant positions for medical staff.

For doctors, VA Puget Sound in November reported 27 vacancies among the staff of about 200 physicians. That vacancy rate of 13.5 percent was substantially lower than the 17 percent rate reported in a 2013 survey of all U.S. hospitals by AMN Healthcare.

Recruiting and hiring may get a boost from legislation approved by Congress last summer in the aftermath of the VA scandals.

One measure doubled the value of debt forgiveness the agency can offer to doctors. Now, the VA can pay for \$120,000 of a new doctor's loans — a powerful incentive for those needing to pay off medical school costs.

Morale sags

Over the long haul, the morale of the VA workforce will be one key to holding onto employees.

VA Puget Sound employees say morale started to decline during a four-year period of wage freezes that began in 2009 while the VA network was growing by thousands of patients each year.

At American Lake, administrators ordered medical providers to see more patients while lagging at hiring new staff, according to Buchanan, the former American Lake physician who's now retired.

"No solution was provided. No additional personnel were allowed," he said. "There was always, always a delay in allowing us to hire someone when someone retired or left."

In June 2009, the problems at American Lake prompted a petition among workers pleading for more employees.

"We have been told time and time again that upper management is hearing our cry for help and yet the primary care situation continues to worsen month by month," the petition stated. "We should no longer sit back and watch our patients get poor access to healthcare, [and] the employee morale continue to plummet — including employee flight and early retirement."

The pressure to do more with less made employees feel underappreciated, said Michael Freeman, a VA employee for more than 30 years. He's now president of the union that represents nurses and hundreds of other frontline employees at the American Lake campus.

Open-door policy

VA Puget Sound officials do not concede any major morale problems and say they're always willing to hear from employees.

"I have an open-door policy so if a nurse is having an issue he or she can see me at anytime," said Karen Allen, Puget Sound's associate director of nursing, who has worked for the VA for more than 40 years. She says she loves the "camaraderie and family-like atmosphere."

Officials also say they've been working to improve the hiring process. In the past, that might have taken half a year, or even longer. One former nurse who took nine months to get a job offer, then another six weeks to have the correct pay rate calculated.

Wilkerson, the VA Puget Sound human resources director, said that the goal now is to have tentative offers within 60 days.

"We have come very close to that time frame" she said.

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MILITARY

Russia critical of NATO moves on Ukraine status

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — NATO members pushed Ukraine toward dropping its nonaligned status, Russia claimed Wednesday, and also criticized the alliance for expanding its military presence near Russian borders.

Ukraine's parliament abandoned the nonaligned position Tuesday, possibly paving the way for a bid to join NATO, in defiance of Russia's protests.

The move doesn't guarantee that Ukraine will apply to join the alliance, and its prospects for membership in the near term appear dim anyway. With a war against pro-Russia separatists in the east and its economy in shambles, Ukraine has much to overcome to achieve the stability that the alliance seeks in its members.

Valeriy Chalyi, a deputy chief of staff for the Ukrainian president, emphasized Wednesday that the parliament vote doesn't mean

that the bid to join the alliance is on the immediate agenda. He added that Ukraine should focus on reforms to meet membership criteria.

Despite that, Moscow strongly protested the Ukrainian parliament's move. Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov said Wednesday that unidentified NATO members had pushed Ukraine to make the move in a bid to turn it into a "forward line for confronting Russia."

"Under the slogan of a 'Russian threat,' NATO is expanding its military potential in the Baltics, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania," Antonov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies.

He added that NATO has doubled the number of its military flights near Russia's borders to about 3,000 this year. He said Russia was particularly concerned about pilots from non-nuclear NATO members, like Poland, being trained for nuclear weapons.

NATO, in its turn, has accused Russia of putting civilian flights at risk by boosting the number of its military air patrols and having its planes fly with their transponders switched off.

The alliance has halted cooperation with Russia over its annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and its support for a pro-Russia insurgency in eastern Ukraine.

Amid the tensions, NATO has moved to reassure its members in eastern Europe by stepping up air patrols over the Baltic Sea and rotating military units in and out of countries like Poland and the Baltic republics.

Antonov also said that Russia plans to expand military cooperation with China, Egypt and Latin American countries. In particular, Moscow is discussing provisions for its navy ships to use ports in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela for replenishing supplies and undergoing maintenance.



PAVEL GOLOVKIN/AP

Russian President Vladimir Putin has used sanctions by the West as a rallying point in Moscow.

Putin: Russians give high approval ratings to president

FROM FRONT PAGE

Putin's seizure of Crimea from Ukraine and continuing support for pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine have outraged the West. But his approval ratings have soared at home, hovering at about 80 percent even as the economy confronts its biggest financial crisis since 1998 when it was forced into default.

All of that means the ramifications of the unfolding economic crisis in Russia remain uncertain. A major question now being examined in capitals around Europe and Washington is whether to add more sanctions to further pressure Putin to pull out of Crimea and cease support of separatists in Ukraine's east. Western leaders are divided.

In Europe, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has spoken in favor of standing firm on current sanctions, but there are others in the 28-member European Union, where major policy decisions require consensus, leaning toward softening measures already taken "EU unity is wobbly and fraying, and this is a test," said Judy Dempsey, a regional expert with the Europe branch of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Putin, under pressure at home, could attempt to exploit such divisions in a push for some sort of compromise. However, any deal that allows Russia to hold Crimea would send a dangerous signal, Dempsey said.

"Where do you draw the line if you turn over Crimea like this?" she said.

Dempsey believes Merkel, as the leader of Europe's main economic power, should fight to hold the line on sanctions to preserve Europe's credibility.

"Merkel knows exactly what is at stake," Dempsey said. "She knows Europe is going through its first real post-Cold War crisis. If she can't manage this, then Europe will not be able to do big foreign policy."

Officials from several EU countries have urged the grouping to allow its sanctions to lapse automatically next year.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama appears reluctant to impose new sanctions beyond the recently added penalties against investment in Crimea, despite signing recent legislation that empowers him to do so.

Some experts say imposing

more sanctions could be counterproductive. The prime reason for Russia's economic troubles is an economy overly dependent on high oil prices to balance its budget, not the West's economic penalties, experts say. With oil prices at more than a five-year low, the Russian economy would be struggling with or without sanctions.

Moscow's tenuous financial situation likely will make it more flexible in dealing with these issues and less willing to act aggressively in Ukraine," the Texas-based security analysis firm STRATFOR, predicted in an analysis distributed Monday.

Sanctions help feed Putin's narrative that Russia is under siege and that the West is to blame for its woes, giving the Russian leader a rallying point in the face of domestic challenges and questions about economic mismanagement, experts say.

"I would lay off the sanctions right now, but I would increase NATO presence in eastern Europe and Baltic states to show this is our territory and not give Putin any room for miscalculation or doubt," Szabo said.

At a time when Russia's economy is already in deep trouble, pushing too hard on sanctions could bring risks beyond just economic fallout.

"It could have security implications as well," STRATFOR observed in a Dec. 17 analysis, which also warned of the potential for heightened nuclear tensions. "At the same time, United States and the European Union understand that pushing a nuclear-armed country as large and powerful as Russia toward full-scale collapse can have serious unintended consequences, and such an aim ultimately may not be in their interest, despite the standoff over Ukraine."

During his three-hour news conference last Thursday, Putin showed no signs that Russia's economic troubles would lead him away from Crimea or to give in to Western demands.

"Sometimes I wonder, maybe the bear should sit quietly, munch on berries and honey rather than chasing after piglets," Putin quipped. "Maybe then, they would leave it alone? But no, they wouldn't, because they will always try to chain it up. And as soon as they chain it up, they will pull out its teeth and claws."

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PHOTOS BY VISAR KRYEZH/AP

Ready to take to the air

Above: U.S. Army soldiers of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, part of the NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, prepare their gear Sunday during a parachute training exercise at U.S. military base Camp Bondsteel. Right: Soldiers rest before a parachute jump training exercise



MILITARY

Does Sony hack qualify as an 'attack' on US?

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

President Barack Obama described North Korea's hacking of Sony Pictures Entertainment as "cyberterrorism" — rather than a cyberattack — infuriating many critics. His wording highlights just how new the rules are on this nascent battlefield.

When, how or even if the U.S. should respond militarily to cyber intrusions remains unsettled, although the Pentagon has taken a rhetorically hard line on retaliation since the U.S. Cyber Command was established in 2009 and declared cyberspace a warfare domain a year later.

Several years ago, The Wall Street Journal quoted an unidentified military official summarizing the consequence of attacking U.S. infrastructure via cyber: "If you shut down our power grid, maybe we will put a missile down one of your smokestacks."

But the Sony hacking case illustrates how tricky it is to gauge a proportional response to cyber intrusions. Some cyber experts say intrusions such as North Korea's into the Sony network don't even qualify as "attacks."

The fact that North Korea hacked into the computer network of a nongovernmental entity certainly complicates a response by the U.S. government.

"I think that's the point of the kinds of cyberattacks they're conducting," said Carl W. Baker, a Korea expert with the Pacific Foreign Policy Center in Honolulu and a former intelligence analyst for U.S. Forces Korea.

"They're basically annoyances. They're not really damaging to long-term national security interests of the United States."

He compared the Sony hack to a March 2013 cyberattack in South Korea in which the computer systems of banks and broadcasters froze for days, followed by an attempted intrusion into the government's websites.

"They can attack systems that are by nature more vulnerable than those systems that really



Soldiers with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, work on cybersecurity procedures during a field training exercise at Yakima Training Center, Wash., in October 2013.

Courtesy of the U.S. Army

matter to the national security of the United States or South Korea," Baker said. "I think that's what we need to understand. They certainly have capability, and they exercise that capability with an understanding of what risks are involved. I think they see this as something that's in their national security interest, and it's probably marginal to U.S. national security interest, so they're probably willing to take that risk knowing that the outcome is going to be no worse than people complaining about North Korea's cyber capabilities."

North Korean websites were down for more than nine hours Tuesday, and service was intermittent a day later, leading some to speculate that the U.S. was making good on Obama's vow to respond to the Sony hack. Neither the U.S. nor South Korea offered public statements on the outage.

Regardless of who or what caused that Internet crash, cyber

retaliation against North Korea isn't a particularly effective response to computer raids directed by the Kim Jong Un regime, argues cyber expert Motohiro Tsuchiya.

"Responding to North Korea by cyber means is not a big deal actually, because they are not dependent on the Internet," said Tsuchiya, a professor of the Graduate School of Media and Governance at Keio University in Tokyo and currently a visiting scholar at the East-West Center in Honolulu.

"They are not dependent on digital technologies. Only a few people are using the Internet in North Korea, so it's not a big damage to them to stop the Internet, actually."

And by strict application of international law, the Sony hack wasn't an "attack" because it didn't involve physical damage, he said.

"They were just stealing infor-

mation, disclosing private communications and trying to disrupt a public screening," Tsuchiya said. Examples that meet the threshold of an attack would be killing someone, breaching a dam or crashing an airplane.

Some cyber analysts think it's unsound to equate a cyberattack on American interests with a "kinetic" attack involving bullets and bombs.

"A cyberattack, in and of itself, does not demand an immediate response to safeguard national security," Dr. Martin C. Libicki, a technology expert with the Rand Corp., said during testimony before a House committee last year.

Libicki argued that the U.S. shouldn't back itself into a corner in which it must always respond to a cyberattack "whether doing so is wise or not."

Overemphasizing cyber threats "tends to compel the United States to respond vigorously should any

such cyberattack occur, or even merely when the possible precursors to a potential cyberattack have been identified," he testified. "Having created a demand among the public to do something, the government is then committed to doing something even when doing little or nothing is called for."

Cyber tampering by a relatively small power such as North Korea poses little real threat, at least for now, said Erik Gartzke, an associate professor of political science at the University of San Diego and professor of government at the University of Essex in England.

"If an enemy turns out the lights in California but cannot follow through with some other action, then eventually, the lights come back on and the United States is really annoyed," Gartzke said during an interview before the recent Sony hack. "Breaching an enemy barrier — as occurred on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion — is only decisive because there are U.S. forces ready to exploit this breach."

Few, if any, adversaries to the U.S. have such a capability at the dawn of the 21st century.

"There may come a time when an enemy of the United States can use a cyberattack to create conditions that allow other more kinetic forms of force to be carried out in a way that threatens U.S. interests or power," Gartzke said. "I think this is a very long way off. Because even if the U.S. or destroying America's capabilities to retaliate are pretty far-fetched right now, cyber has limited salience as a threat."

Cyberattacks against the U.S. are "pin pricks," because opponents know that the U.S. has the military means of carrying out retaliation, Gartzke said.

Conversely, America's credible threat of force would allow it to more effectively employ cyber as an offensive weapon to weaken a foe, such as by disabling radars, before commencing a traditional military operation, he said.

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N. Korea outage a case study in online uncertainties

The Associated Press

LONDON — North Korea's microscopic corner of the Internet has had a rough couple of days, suffering seven outages in the last 48 hours, according to one Web traffic monitor.

The mysterious problems have some talking of a retaliatory cyberattack by the United States, which holds Pyongyang responsible for last month's spectacular hack of Sony Pictures. American officials have fueled speculation with vague denials, but security experts say North Korea's Internet infrastructure is so skeletal that even amateurs — or a simple glitch — could have brought it clattering down.

"A large city block in London or New York would have more IP (Internet Protocol) addresses than North Korea," said Ofer Gayer, a security researcher at Incapsula

Inc. He said that if the network was targeted by a kind of distributed denial-of-service — or DDoS — attack, the list of suspects is endless.

For many, the uncertainty over the outage — and lingering doubts over who hacked Sony — illustrates how little we can really know about attacks in the Information Age.

Here's what is known:

For two days, North Korea struggled to stay online: After spending a significant chunk of Monday offline, North Korea's Internet had two short outages Tuesday morning, according to Jim Cowie, the chief scientist at Dyn Research, an Internet performance company.

Cowie characterized the outages as a "return to instability," and said they were the same type of outages that caused the original disruption. Hiccups

continued until Wednesday.

It doesn't take much to knock North Korea off the Web: North Korea has a tiny online footprint, thousands of millions of times smaller than that of the United States or even arch-rival South Korea. Gayer pegged the country's total bandwidth at 2.5 gigabits per second, a minuscule amount of traffic which could easily be overwhelmed by a denial-of-service attack. Only last week, a London teenager pleaded guilty to a cyberattack against an anti-spam group which clocked in at 300 gigabits per second.

Speculation is rampant: U.S. officials have refused to be drawn over the online mischief, feeding speculation that American retribution may be to blame for North Korea's Internet problems.

The attack doesn't fit the pattern of an American cyberstrike, said Dan Holden, of Arbor Net-

works, which works to block denial-of-service attacks. He said online activists may be to blame, and social media chatter provides some support for the claim.

One prominent account linked to Anonymous, the amorphous collective of self-appointed cyber-vigilantes, briefly claimed credit for knocking North Korea offline before it was itself was yanked from the Internet by Twitter. Rival claims — from obscure groups carrying names like "Lizard Squad" or "Gator League" — were even harder to assess.

This has happened before: North Korea's Internet has gone dark before. In March 2013 the nation experienced connectivity problems for the better part of a day and a half.

The North Korean government blamed the United States for the problems, but their cause has never been publicly confirmed.

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MILITARY

2015 brings slight change to BAH

By Tom Philpott

Basic Allowance for Housing paid to a million servicemembers living off base in the United States will rise by an average half percentage point in January as two slimming changes to rate calculations take hold.

The 2015 BAH rates no longer will include added dollars for renters insurance, a move that dampens rates an average of 1 percent.

Also, the fiscal 2015 Defense Authorization Act that President Barack Obama signed Dec. 19 slows BAH growth so new rates slow 99 percent rather than 100 percent of average rental costs for stateside servicemembers.

Both steps are intended to free up about a billion housing allowance dollars over the next five years so the services can divert them to other readiness needs as defense budgets continue to be squeezed by the 2011 Budget Control Act with its automatic "sequestration" enforcement tool.

BAH rates in January will climb an average of \$17 per renter, but individual rate adjustments will vary by pay grade, dependency status and assignment area.

For example, rates will climb an average of 8 percent in San Diego and 7 percent near Travis Air Force Base, Calif. But BAH will fall an average of 11 percent near Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and 8 percent in Ogden, Utah, two areas that will see the sharpest rates declines.

The good news for current BAH recipients is individual rate protection remains in effect. No servicemembers will see BAH drop unless they change assignment areas "and as long as they do not have a reduction in pay grade or a change in dependency status," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen, a spokesman for the office of assistant secretary of defense for personnel and force readiness.

Rate protection is an "integral part of the BAH program," Christensen added, and "ensures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area's housing costs decrease."

The Pentagon eliminated renters insurance coverage from BAH through "procedural changes," Defense officials said. For BAH recipients, it means a rate drop of \$200 to \$300 a year.

The other dampening of rates, so they cover 99 percent of average rental costs and utilities, required a change in law. Senior defense officials and military leaders proposed earlier this year that BAH rates be capped through 2017 until rates cover 95 percent of rental costs and utilities. Congress decided to limit the impact to one percent in 2015.

House-Senate conferees on the

MILITARY UPDATE

defense bill warned that Congress will reconsider the hefty compensation curbs sought by the Joint Chiefs after the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commissions delivers its recommendations in February.

Servicemembers can find 2015 BAH rates online at:

www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm

Also taking effect Jan. 1 are new basic allowance for subsistence (BAS) rates, which will increase by 2.9 percent. The new rates are \$367.92 per month for enlisted members and \$253.38 per month for officers.

BAS adjustments are linked to changes in food prices as measured by the annual change in the U.S. Department of Agriculture cost of food at home index.

The Defense Department also released its 2015 contiguous United States (CONUS) cost of living allowance (COLA) rates. About 12,000 members will see a decrease in CONUS COLA payments and 7,000 will see an increase or no change. Roughly 4,000 members no longer will draw CONUS COLA payments, a taxable supplemental allowance to help offset higher prices in high-cost locations. CONUS COLA rates vary based on location, pay grade, years of service and dependent status.

New CONUS COLA rates can be calculated at: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/conusCalc.cfm

The BAH budget for 2015 is about \$20 billion.

The president's 2016 budget request in February is expected to call for more dampening of BAH payments. Congress would have to approve them. When BAH rates first were set more than a decade ago, initial rates covered only 80 percent of members' actual rental costs. During recent wars, Congress adopted a phased program to close that BAH gap with rental costs gradually, and finally achieved that goal in 2005.

In 2015 that trend begins to reverse course.

Servicemembers living off base overseas get an Overseas Housing Allowance instead of BAH. OHA is based on what members actually pay in rent and so gets adjusted periodically based on shifts in the dollar's value against local foreign currency.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, Va. 20120, email milupdate@aol.com or Twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update

Major subcontractor to end ties with troubled car-shipping firm

By Mike Fitzgerald

Bellville (Ill.) News-Democrat

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — In a move that could mean more delays for servicemembers who rely on troubled car-shipper International Auto Logistics, one of the firm's top subcontractors has announced it is terminating its relationship with IAL by early next year because of IAL's performance and payment problems.

Liberty Global Logistics LLC, of Lake Success, N.Y., which coordinates ocean cargo ships, is exercising its termination rights with IAL "due to the prime contractor's failure to cure contract defaults," according to Robert G. Wellner, Liberty's executive vice-president. "Liberty will complete its obligation to deliver GPC units booked with Liberty in the next few weeks."

As of Tuesday, Liberty still had 343 vehicles to deliver for IAL, according to the Wellner's statement.

Amanda Nunez, an IAL spokeswoman, did not return two calls seeking comment.

Last week, in a courtroom in Brunswick, Ga., Liberty agreed to return the keys to 66 vehicles it had confiscated at a port in Houston, because IAL owed it at least \$3.6 million in late payments for ocean shipping. A consent order signed by Liberty and IAL, under which IAL agreed to pay off the \$3.6 million debt, led Liberty give back the car keys and to continue working with IAL until at least the end of the year.

In a written statement Tuesday, Transcom spokesman Maj. Matthew Gregory, said the command had been aware that Liberty had intended to terminate its contract with IAL. "We will not comment any further on a matter that is between a contractor and subcontractor," Gregory wrote. "IAL can subcontract with other companies as they deem appropriate, however U.S. Transportation Command will continue to hold IAL accountable for delivery of privately owned vehicles as required by the GPC III contract."

Servicemembers are entitled to on-time delivery of their vehicles, in the condition they were entrusted to IAL's care, Gregory wrote, "and IAL is responsible for compensating servicemembers for inconvenience or damages. We continue to closely monitor IAL's contract performance."

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense Inspector General's office is sending an audit team to Scott by the end of this month to look at performance complaints concerning IAL, the target of many servicemembers' complaints over its shipment of their privately owned vehicles overseas and back since the firm took over the contract May 1.

The Defense Department audit team will be looking at the U.S. Transcom's Global Privately Owned Vehicle Contract III, under which the company's command last year awarded a nearly \$1 billion vehicle-shipping contract to IAL. In addition, the auditors will look at multiple vehicle processing

centers, according to a project announcement letter issued by Michael J. Roark, the department's assistant inspector general.

"Our objective is to determine whether U.S. Transportation Command contracting personnel incorporated adequate controls to properly monitor contractor performance and to address performance concerns on the Global Privately Owned Vehicle Contract III," Roark wrote in a Dec. 19 memorandum sent to Gen. Paul Selva, Transcom's commander and several top civilian Pentagon and Air Force civilian leaders.

The audit began when U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., contacted the Defense Contract Management Agency in October to request an audit of the shipping program.

The senators' request for the audit came after a swelling tide of complaints over the summer from IAL customers in Illinois and the rest of the nation. The customers had complained about vehicles shipped home after military tours overseas that were either missing, arriving months later than promised or mysteriously damaged.

Nunez said in a statement that the company "has worked tirelessly to clear any backlog," while also ensuring that new vehicles coming into the system are delivered on time. The defense contract agency contacted the Pentagon Inspector General, whose probe of the contract and IAL's performance and is expected to take about seven months, according to a spokeswoman for Durbin's office.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Riskier rescue tries OK'd after beheadings

By DAVID S. CLOUD
AND ZAID ALI

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON—Under cover of darkness, three dozen U.S. commandos crept up on a walled compound in southern Yemen. Intelligence indicated that Luke Somers, an American hostage, was imprisoned inside.

Conditions were far from ideal. Getting to Somers on foot required breaching two walls. There was poor surveillance of the rugged site. But Somers' captors had threatened to kill him within days. So Navy SEALs went in.

The attempted Dec. 6 rescue quickly went awry when a barking dog apparently alerted guards and a 10-minute firefight erupted. U.S. officials said an al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula militant raced ahead of the raiders and shot Somers, 33, and another hostage, South African schoolteacher Pierre Korkie. Both later died.

The disappointing outcome, one of three unsuccessful rescue missions this year, highlights a new willingness by the Obama administration to try to save Americans held by terrorist groups despite risks that once would have been considered too great, senior U.S. officials said.

The willingness to accept the risks was given greater impetus this past fall by grisly videos of the beheadings of Americans and others held captive by Islamic State militants in Syria, officials said.

It also rests on the growing realization in the White House that, unlike in times past, rescuers can't wait until they are certain where hostages are and until the Pentagon, FBI and intelligence agencies have high confidence about their ability to rescue them.

"We've needed to go out with



Courtesy of U.S. Naval Special Warfare

Navy SEAL Qualification Training students ride an inflatable boat in San Diego Bay during the 12-day maritime operations segment of their training program.

imperfect intelligence and imperfect conditions to have any chance of saving American lives," said a senior military official who spoke on condition of anonymity in discussing classified operations. "And that means there's that much more risk of failing."

Prompted in part by complaints from hostage families, the White House last month said it had begun a review of how the government handles such cases. But officials said the review is unlikely to lead to a recommendation to lift the U.S. prohibition on paying ransoms, as many other countries do to get their citizens home.

Nor, Pentagon officials said, is the review likely to lead to the constraint of rescue efforts. Islamic State militants are believed to hold at least one other American hostage, an aid worker abducted in Syria last year.

U.S. officials have disclosed few details about the woman in hopes

that minimizing attention will aid her rescue.

The willingness of the White House to approve rescue missions on less definitive intelligence began last summer when U.S. special operations troops swarmed into a compound in northern Syria where journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff were believed to be imprisoned.

Recently freed Western hostages, who had been held with the Americans before being ransomed and released, had given the FBI details on the layout of the buildings and other information. U.S. intelligence pinpointed a likely compound near Raqqa, an Islamic State stronghold, according to a senior U.S. official who spoke anonymously in discussing sensitive details of the raid.

Army Delta Force commandos took a week to rehearse the operation and move from Fort Bragg, N.C., to the Middle East for an assault on the compound.

They landed in helicopters on the night of July 3 and engaged in a firefight with militants.

But Foley and Sotloff weren't there.

"It took a lot longer because [the commandos] weren't on location and because of the need to rehearse before going into a tough location," said another Pentagon official, who, like others, agreed to speak in return for anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the raids.

The subsequent beheadings of Foley and Sotloff, shown in gruesome videos posted by their captors in August and September, quickly changed the calculus for President Barack Obama and his advisers as they considered the dangers of rescue operations.

"They're willing to accept a bit more risk than we expected," the senior military officer said of the White House. "And the military is certainly willing to take these on because we know the impending fate of these hostages."

Obama has authorized several daring rescues.

In 2009, Navy SEAL snipers saved an American ship captain held in a lifeboat by Somali pirates. In 2012, U.S. special operations troops rescued two aid workers, an American and a Dane, held in a remote camp in Somalia.

Another attempt proved tragic.

In 2011, four Americans were shot and killed by Somali pirates who had seized their sailboat and were being trailed by U.S. Navy vessels.

Rescuers in those cases knew where the hostages were held, a luxury they don't always have in Syria.

Intelligence gathering in Syria has improved in recent months.

U.S. surveillance aircraft that now fly regularly over the east and north of the country are able to intercept communications and

gather intelligence on sites believed to hold hostages.

But Islamic State fighters also are taking greater precautions, moving hostages more frequently to frustrate rescue attempts.

The failed operation in Yemen this month followed an earlier attempt to rescue Somers. On Nov. 25, U.S. commandos freed eight captives, including citizens of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Ethiopia, who were being held in a cave. But Somers apparently had been moved days earlier.

The second try came after U.S. officials received a tip that Somers, a photojournalist who had disappeared from the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, in September 2013, had been taken to Shabwa province, where al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula has many supporters, U.S. officials said.

His captors had imprisoned him and Korkie in the house of a local sheik, Mubarak al-Haradi, who had agreed to hide them. Tariq al-Daghari, a local tribal leader, said in an interview. "He volunteered to hide the hostages in his house," in a walled compound with two other buildings, said al-Daghari.

Even with the tip, it was a close call on whether to send the SEALs. The team was still in the region and able to move quickly. But it had no confirmation that Somers was there.

The team also had little time to rehearse the operation, which required breaching walls and overpowering five militants and at least a dozen others in the compound.

But the SEALs lost the advantage of surprise when they were spotted about 110 yards from the outer wall. In the firefight that followed, U.S. troops killed at attack helicopters for help.

By the time they made it inside, Somers and Korkie had been shot.

Navy investigating whether bin Laden shooter told too much

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—A Navy official says the service is investigating an allegation that the former Navy SEAL, who claims he shot and killed Osama bin Laden may have revealed classified information to those not authorized to receive it.

Robert O'Neill has given numerous interviews since coming

forward to say he was part of the operation that culminated in the death of the al-Qaida leader. O'Neill told The Associated Press last month that he has taken pains not to divulge classified information or compromise SEAL tactics.

On Tuesday, a spokeswoman for the Navy, Cmdr. Ryan Perry, said in a statement that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service

had received an allegation that O'Neill may have revealed classified information to people not authorized to receive such information.

"In response, NCIS has initiated an investigation to determine the merit of the allegations," Perry said.

A call to a spokeswoman for O'Neill was not immediately returned Tuesday night.

The revelations by O'Neill, who joined the Navy in 1995 and earned two Silver and five Bronze Stars during his service, has generated discord among some current and former SEALs for breaking a code of silence regarding their missions. O'Neill has said that he knows the public has a right to know more details of the 2011 mission to bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

Pentagon officials have said that it's not clear whose shots actually killed bin Laden.

Another SEAL, Matt Bissonnette, has suggested that the point man who led the way to bin Laden's bedroom fired the fatal shots, and that bin Laden was already down when he and a second SEAL, presumably O'Neill, shot him.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Jordanian pilot is captured

By OMAR AKOUR AND BASSEM MROUE
The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — The Islamic State group captured a Jordanian pilot after shooting down his warplane over Syria, Jordan said Wednesday, in the extremists' first successful downing of an aircraft from the international coalition waging an air campaign against the extremists.

The show of the extremists' capabilities underscored the risks for the United States and the multiple Arab and European countries whose warplanes are participating in bombing campaign aimed at pushing back the jihadists' control across much of Syria and Iraq. It also posed Jordan with a nightmare scenario — its pilot was the first foreign soldier to fall into the extremists' hands.

It was not immediately known how the fighters shot down the warplane. The Islamic State group is known to have stocks of Russian-made Igla anti-aircraft missiles. The shoulder-fired weapon has long been in the Syrian and Iraqi government arsenals — it was used during the 1991 Gulf War by Iraqi forces to down a British Tornado jet, for example. More recently, militants in Chechnya have used them to down Russian helicopters.

Jordanian Information Minister Mohammad Momani told The Associated Press that the plane was shot down by "ground fire" but did not elaborate.

Activists monitoring the conflict said Islamic State group fighters shot down the warplane near the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, the group's de facto capital.

The Raqqa Media Center published a photograph said to be of the pilot — in a white



Members of the Islamic State group hold a captured pilot, center, wearing a white shirt, in Raqqa, Syria, on Wednesday. Activists say Islamic State fighters shot down a warplane believed to be from the U.S.-led coalition over Syria.

shirt, naked from the waist down and sopping wet, being pulled by gunmen out of what appeared to be a lake. Another picture shows him surrounded by more than a dozen fighters, some of them masked. The center said IS fighters are scouring the area in case there is a second pilot.

The United States and several Arab allies have been striking the Islamic State group in Syria since Sept. 23, and U.S. and other international warplanes have been waging an air campaign against the extremists in Iraq for even longer. The campaign aims to push back the jihadi organization after it took over much of Iraq and Syria and declared a "caliphate."

Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are participating in the Syria strikes, with Qatari logistical support. The pilot's capture raises a nightmare scenario for Jordan, which has been sharply criticized by militant sympathizers for its participation. IS in the past has beheaded dozens of Syrian soldiers it captured in opera-

tions around the country. The group has also beheaded three Americans and two Britons.

Jordan's military said in a statement that as its air force was carrying out a military mission against the Islamic State group Wednesday morning, "one of our warplanes crashed," it said. "The pilot was taken hostage by the Daesh terrorist organization," it added, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it had confirmation from activists on the ground that the aircraft was shot down, either by a Russian-made anti-aircraft missile or by heavy machinegun fire.

The Raqqa Media Center, an agency of activists that operates openly in IS-ruled areas with permission of the group, said the plane was downed near the village of Hamra Ghanam outside Raqqa. It also posted a photo of the pilot's military identification card, identifying him as Mu'ath Safi Yousef al-Kaseasbeh.

28 killed in Iraq bombings

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A suicide bomber detonated his payload among a group of pro-government Sunni militiamen near the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Wednesday, killing at least 24 people.

The attacker mingled with the militiamen as they gathered at a military base in the town of Madain, about 14 miles south of Baghdad, to receive their monthly paychecks, two police officers said. At least 15 of the dead were Sunni militiamen and the rest were soldiers, while 55 others were wounded, they said.

The Sunni militiamen, known as Salwa or Awakening Councils, were formed at the height of Iraq's sectarian fighting in 2006 and 2007 and allied with U.S. troops against al-Qaida in Iraq, a precursor to the Islamic State extremist group. They are viewed as traitors by Sunni extremists fighting to overthrow the Shiite-led government.

In another attack, four civilians were killed and seven wounded when a bomb tore through an outdoor market in the town of Youssefiyah, 12 miles south of Baghdad, a police officer said.

Four medical officials confirmed the casualty figures. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release information to the media.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Wednesday's bombings, but they bore the hallmarks of the Islamic State.

Fort Bragg troops await deployment

By AMANDA DOLASINSKI
The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

The first group of 3rd Brigade Combat Team paratroopers to deploy for Iraq from Fort Bragg, N.C., is slated to follow a narrow security mission, but is ready for whatever is asked of it.

"Our specific mission is to go perform in a security role and guard a fixed site with American interests in Iraq," said Lt. Col. Jacob Larkowich, commander of 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

"The paratroopers are prepared for a broad range of missions," he said. "If they're asked to do something, they'll be capable of doing it. If we just guard a fixed site for some number of months before coming home, they're prepared to do that as well."

Earlier this month, officials announced about 250 paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, will deploy to Iraq

in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. They will leave in late December and could be deployed for nine months.

The paratroopers will conduct security operations, according to officials. Larkowich said the paratroopers are not tasked to work alongside or train Iraqi soldiers, but "it's not outside the realm of possibility."

Security and guard missions are part of the unit's core functions, Larkowich said. The unit will relieve another infantry unit that has been conducting the security mission, Larkowich said.

The deployment will be the first Iraq mission for Larkowich. The unit's sergeant major, Arthur Cliff Burgoyne Jr., has been to the country twice before.

Both leaders said there is a range of experience across the unit. It's possible some of their soldiers have been to Iraq before, but since the unit is weighted toward younger soldiers, they expect others have not. The battalion's most recent deployment was to Afghanistan in 2012, Larkowich said.

The unit is constantly training to maintain readiness. In October, the paratroopers participated in repetitious, live ammunition training in daytime and nighttime that would mirror a combat situation soldiers could encounter on a deployment.

"This is their chance to put what they've been trained to do into actual application," Larkowich said.

Next month, about 1,000 paratroopers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division also will deploy to Iraq to support Operation Inherent Resolve. Those soldiers are tasked with training, advising and assisting Iraqi security forces to help build their capability and capacity to defeat threats. That deployment is scheduled to last about nine months.

Lt. Gen. James Terry, commander of Combined Joint Task Force, Operation Inherent Resolve, said U.S. personnel will serve in noncombat roles to support the effort. He expects about 1,500 personnel from coalition forces to also participate.

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STARS AND STRIPES

NATION



DAVID CARSON, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/AP

Police try to control a crowd Wednesday on the lot of a gas station following a shooting by police Tuesday in Berkeley, Mo., after a man reportedly pointed a gun at an officer.

Police shoot St. Louis man

Cops: Officer fired weapon after suspect pointed gun

By JIM SUHR

The Associated Press

BERKELEY, Mo. — A suburban St. Louis police officer shot and killed a man who pointed a gun at him, only a few miles from where the fatal shooting of a black man by a white officer led to weeks of protests earlier this year, police said Wednesday.

A crowd of about 100 people were gathered early Wednesday at the scene in Berkeley, close to the town of Ferguson, where Michael Brown, 18, died in August.

A statement from St. Louis County police spokesman Sgt. Brian Schellman said a Berkeley

police officer was conducting a routine business check at a gas station around 11:15 p.m. Tuesday when he saw two men and approached them.

One of the men pulled a handgun and pointed it at the officer, Schellman said. The officer fired several shots, striking and fatally wounding the man.

The second man fled, and the dead man's handgun has been recovered, according to Schellman.

The St. Louis County Police Department is handling the investigation, and no further details about the incident were immediately available.

Authorities did not immediately

identify the man who was shot. But the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that a woman at the scene, Toni Martin, said he was her son, Antonio Martin, 18.

Toni Martin told the newspaper that her son was with his girlfriend at the time of the shooting.

The protesters who gathered early Wednesday milled around the gas pumps at the station, some taunting and yelling at police officers. Some had strands of yellow police-line tape draped around their neck, with others using it as a headband.

Authorities from multiple agencies, some in riot gear, stood among the protesters.

Legal pot adds to Denver's homeless

By SADIE GURMAN

The Associated Press

DENVER — Chris Easterling was sick of relying on drug dealers in Minneapolis when he needed marijuana to help ease the pain of multiple sclerosis. They were flaky, often leaving the homeless man without the drug when he needed relief the most.

So he moved to Denver, where legal pot dispensaries are plentiful and accessible.

Easterling is among a growing number of homeless people who have recently come to Colorado seeking its legal marijuana, and who now remain in the state and occupy beds in shelters, according to service providers.

While no state agency records how many homeless people were drawn by legal weed, officials at homeless centers say the influx

they are seeing is straining their ability to meet the needs of the increasing population.

"The older ones are coming for medical (marijuana), the younger ones are coming just because it's legal," said Brett Van Sickle, director of Denver's Salvation Army Crossroads Shelter, which has more than doubled its staff to accommodate the increase.

The shelter did an informal survey of the roughly 500 new out-of-towners who stayed there between July and September and found as many as 30 percent had relocated for pot, he said.

Shelters in some other parts of the state said they haven't noticed the problem or haven't surveyed their residents about it.

Colorado's homeless population and its marijuana dispensaries are both concentrated in Denver, which could be why centers say they are experiencing a more noticeable rise.

Other factors could be driving the rising homeless rates. Colorado's economy is thriving, but the number of affordable homes and apartments is shrinking.

Julie Smith, of Denver's Road Home, a city program that aims to end homelessness, said the city's rising overall population could be a reason for an increase in the number homeless people.

She said the agency has heard anecdotal reports about homeless people moving to the state for the marijuana, but officials don't have any numbers to support that assertion.

The city is eager to see the results of a study by Metropolitan State University of Denver's Criminal Justice and Criminology Department of issues related to legal marijuana, including any correlation between legal marijuana and rates of homelessness.



BRENNAN LINSELEY/AP

Homeless man Chris Easterling smokes legal hash oil to ease the pain of his multiple sclerosis in front of the Salvation Army shelter where he sleeps in Denver on Nov. 26.

Worker freed in Cuba to get \$3.2M from US government

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A former subcontractor freed last week after five years in a Cuban jail will receive \$3.2 million from the federal government as part of a settlement with the Maryland-based company that employed him at the time of his arrest.

Alan Gross, who was arrested in 2009, was freed Dec. 17 as the U.S. announced it would re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba after more than a half-century. He had been working there to set up Internet access without local censorship for its small Jewish community, but the Cuban government considered such work subversive and sentenced him to 15 years in prison.

The U.S. Agency for International Development said in a statement Tuesday that an agreement reached in principle last month with Development Alternatives, of Bethesda, Md., had been made



Gross

final this week. Although the statement did not specify the amount to be paid to Gross, a USAID spokesman said it was \$3.2 million.

The USAID said in the statement that the agreement would resolve claims pending before the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals for unanticipated claims under a cost-reimbursement contract, including claims related to Gross. The USAID spokesman, who was not authorized to be named and requested anonymity to discuss the terms of the agreement, said DAI had sought \$7 million. Development Alternatives did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Police: Family slaying suspect OD'd

The Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — A man believed to have killed his ex-wife and five of her relatives earlier this month in the Philadelphia suburbs killed himself with a combination of drugs after the slayings, authorities said.

Prosecutors and police said in a statement Tuesday evening that the Montgomery County coroner had determined that Bradley Stone, 35, died of "combined drug intoxication" involving an antidepressant and an anti-psychotic medication. The death was ruled a suicide.

Stone's body was found in the woods about a half-mile from his Pensung home, about 30 miles northwest of Philadelphia, on Dec. 16, the day after authorities said the Iraq War veteran went on a gruesome, 90-minute killing rampage before daybreak at three homes in three nearby towns. They said he spared his two young daughters but killed his ex-wife, her mother, her grandmother, her

sister, her brother-in-law and her 14-year-old niece. A 17-year-old nephew was left with a skull fracture and other injuries but survived after barricading himself in the third floor of his home.

Law enforcement officials said Tuesday that a machete and an axe that both "appeared to be coated in blood" were found near his body, and police also found two medicine bottles, one of which contained a crushed-up powder, as well as an energy drink container that had powder around the lip. Officials said death was due to Trazodone, an antidepressant; Risperidone, an antipsychotic medication; and mCPZ, which is used in psychiatric research but also has been used as a recreational drug.

A forensic examination determined that Stone, who had been locked in a five-year custody fight that sparked frequent calls to the police, had a deep stab wound to the upper thigh as well as three superficial cuts to the leg and hip and 10 scratches on his face and

neck.

Officials said Stone was barred from having firearms following an October 2013 drunken driving arrest, but he lied to a military psychologist as recently as last month, stating that he didn't have any weapons.

Authorities said probation and parole officials made 17 home visits, seven of them unscheduled, during the past year, and none indicated that he might possess weapons or had violated his probation and parole. Officials said he bought three handguns during the past decade and a half, one of which was used in the killings and one of which is still unaccounted for.

People with three DUI convictions within five years are barred from possessing guns, but although Stone had three such convictions they were not within five years, authorities said. His ex-wife had obtained a temporary protective order in abuse order in 2010 but was denied a permanent order, they said.

NATION

Mismanagement seen in interrogation program

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate report on the CIA's interrogation program and the spy agency's official response clash on almost every aspect of the long-secret operation, including the brutality and effectiveness of its methods and the agency's secret dealings with the Bush White House, Congress and the media. Both reports largely agree on one major CIA failure: the agency's mismanagement of the now-shuttered program.

The 525-page summary from the Senate Intelligence Committee paints a chaotic landscape of bureaucratic dysfunction, showing an agency unprepared to take control of terrorist prisoners, unqualified field interrogators who overstepped their legal authority and CIA bosses ignorant about exactly how many detainees were warehoused in their overseas

prisons.

CIA oversight, the Senate committee found, "was deeply flawed throughout the program's duration."

The CIA agrees in its official response that "the agency made serious mistakes in the management and operation of the program."

But it said the breakdowns came in the program's early days and that internal changes corrected much of the disarray before President George W. Bush ordered the "black site" prisons emptied in 2006.

The divide over the depth of the CIA's management failures reflects a long-standing history of conflict between the agency and its critics over how mistakes should be corrected — and whether reforms should come from within or be forced from outside.

The committee's chairwoman, Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, said the panel aimed to

"ensure coercive interrogation practices are not used by our government again."

The agency has proposed a series of changes that would more tightly monitor its covert action programs, but CIA Director John Brennan has been less clear about whether the agency would ever again use interrogation techniques that President Barack Obama calls torture.

The most glaring human evidence of mismanagement cited by the committee is its description of the agency's wrongful deten-



al-Masri

tion of at least 26 prisoners and CIA officials' inability to account for 44 detainees held in one overseas prison facility. The report cites the prison only as "Detention Site Cobalt," but former U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive material identified it as the agency's now-abandoned dungeon in Afghanistan known as the "Salt Pit."

The Senate report cites the high-profile case of Khalid al-Masri, a Lebanese man living in Germany who was grabbed in 2003 by Macedonian authorities and handed over to U.S. officials on erroneous suspicions of terrorist ties.

Al-Masri was flown to the Salt Pit, where he was subjected to abusive interrogation tactics and held for months until his captors turned him loose on an Albanian road in April 2004. He sued the U.S. government unsuccessfully

in American courts but won compensation from Macedonia in a 2012 judgment by the European Court of Human Rights.

Both reports blame poor record-keeping, particularly the lack of documents justifying each suspect's detention.

The CIA agreed that "many of the appropriate records are either absent or inadequate, especially during the 2002-2003 period." But the agency said that standards tightened, adding that the Senate report "tars CIA's entire (detention and interrogation) effort with the mistakes of the first months."

The Senate report said mismanagement ran the duration of the program.

The CIA acknowledged problems, but said it either made corrections or suggested the Senate committee overstated its evidence.



JOHN FITZGUGH, (GULFPORT, MISS.) SUN HERALD/AP

Little 'Frozen' fans let it go

Whitney Fryer, 2, of Bay St. Louis, Miss., dances while wearing a Princess Elsa costume during a showing of the animated Disney film "Frozen" at the Pass Christian, Miss., library on Tuesday. The library shows matinee films when school is out of session and they invited children to dress up.

Satanic display at Fla. Capitol damaged

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida's Capitol has displayed a Pabst Blue Ribbon Festive pole, atheist banners and even a tribute to the Flying Spaghetti Monster. But a display showing an angel falling into flames with the message "Happy Holidays from the Satanic Temple" was too much for one woman.

Susan Hemeryck, 54, tried removing the display Tuesday, and when the Capitol Police told her

she couldn't, she began ripping it apart. She was arrested and charged with criminal mischief. The display had been erected as a satire by an atheist group to counter a nativity scene, which was taken down the day the Satanic Temple installed theirs.

"It's just wrong, when you remove baby Jesus two days before Christmas and put Satan in his place — that just can't happen. I couldn't allow it to happen," said Hemeryck, who said she was wearing a shirt that said "Catholic Warrior" when she arrived at the

Capitol.

"The angel's dead," John Porgal, regional director of American Atheists, said when he arrived at the Capitol.

Hemeryck said she has no criminal record and hasn't even had a speeding ticket in more than 15 years. She had only one regret about Tuesday's incident. "I just yanked that little devil off the fishing line," she said. "I should have just done a better job and finished it off for good."

From The Associated Press

Probe finds gun runner took commercial flights

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A brazen scheme in which guns — even an AK-47 rifle — were taken onto passenger jets for years in carry-on luggage was described by a Brooklyn prosecutor Tuesday as a terrorism threat that should cause the airline industry to end the practice of letting some workers enter airports without security screening.

District Attorney Kenneth Thompson's comment came as he described a case brought against five people, including an airline baggage handler who was charged a day earlier by federal authorities in Atlanta.

Thompson said he was not trying to scare anyone. But he said it's "truly frightening" what investigators learned after a probe

that started as a way to reduce gun violence in Brooklyn.

He said Mark Quentin Henry, 45, who was fired by Delta Air Lines in 2010 after three years for abusing its buddy pass system, took guns aboard at least 17 commercial airlines this year from Atlanta to both New York City airports.

The prosecutor said Henry was given the guns, sometimes in airport restrooms, by Eugene Harvey, 31, an Atlanta baggage handler who worked for Delta before he was fired as a result of the investigation.

Three others were arrested on gun charges in the probe.

Henry was arrested Dec. 10. Thompson said when Henry was confronted by investigators, he said there were guns in a knapsack in his apartment.

Storms strike South

The Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Emergency workers in Mississippi planned to go out Christmas Eve and survey the damage caused by storms that hit the South a day earlier, killing at least four people, flipping over cars, knocking out power to thousands and damaging several homes and businesses.

Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant declared an emergency for two southeastern counties where officials say four people died in the storms and 50 people were injured. Thousands remained without power Wednesday around Columbia, which is about 80 miles southeast of Jackson, officials said.

Mississippi Highway Patrol Lt. Johnny Poulos said authorities shut down the three highways that lead into Columbia because of downed trees, power lines and

other debris.

Most of Georgia was under a flood watch as thunderstorms moved across the state Wednesday morning. Several counties in south Georgia were also under a tornado watch.

In Alabama, authorities said thunderstorms left trees and power lines down across the state and flooded several roads.

Earlier Tuesday, according to the local media, a tornado touched down in Anne, La., downing several power lines and trees and tearing the roof off at least one home. Golf ball-sized hail fell in Enterprise, Miss., along with some pea-sized hail in the Bude area.

Meanwhile in Tallahassee, Fla., the weather service tweeted that travel was strongly discouraged after at least 6 inches of rain hit the area in a short time.

NATION



AP photos

The dome of the former Colt firearms factory sits atop the Coltsville complex in Hartford, Conn.

Conn. Colt gun factory becoming national park

The Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — As a decadal-long push to make a national park out of Samuel Colt's 19th-century gun factory won approval, elected officials hailed the project as a way to boost one of Hartford's poorest neighborhoods and honor the revolver as a marvel of manufacturing. Notably absent from the celebrating was Colt's Manufacturing Co., as it and other gun makers say a strict gun control law has left them feeling unwelcome in the state.

The factory, distinguished by its blue, onion-shaped dome, opened in 1855 and is perhaps the best-known symbol of an era when gun companies in the Connecticut River valley helped to pioneer the concept of interchangeable parts and drive the Industrial Revolution.

While politics in northeastern states have not been seen as friendly to guns for years, the relationship between gun makers and leaders who championed gun control became bitter after Connecticut adopted one of the country's toughest gun control laws following the 2012 Newtown elementary school shooting that left six educators and 20 students dead. A gun industry association withdrew its support for the park project, and Colt executives, who closed the factory in West Hartford one day last year so workers could protest the gun legislation, have declined to discuss it.

The project's leading advocate in Congress, U.S. Rep. John Larson, said in an interview that the park could provide a forum for discussions of Colt's historical

significance and issues including modern-day gun violence.

"It can become a living monument to what transpired and what went into the making and planning of the place and what the ramifications of that are," Larson said.

The measure designating Coltsville as a national park was signed into law last week by President Barack Obama. It is expected to bring in millions of dollars and, eventually, 200,000 visitors annually. A proposal describes possible attractions including a "Colt manufacturing multimedia experience."

The 260-acre site, which was involved in manufacturing until 1994, includes armories, buildings for worker housing and an Episcopal church Elizabeth Colt commissioned in her husband's honor following his death. The Church of the Good Shepherd features revolver parts carved into sandstone above one of the entrances and, at the rear, stained glass with a rendering of Samuel Colt in flowing robes.

Colt and the company's president, Dennis Veilleux, declined several requests to comment on whether it might become involved in the park's development. Veilleux warned last year that the gun law was likely to erode Connecticut ties the company had built up over its 175 years because customers would not want to support the state.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, a Newtown-based gun industry association, withdrew support for the Coltsville legislation last year, saying the campaign reflected hypocrisy by the state's congressional delegation



A stained glass window depicting Samuel Colt is shown inside the Church of the Good Shepherd, which was built by Colt's widow, in Hartford.

and governor. The group's senior vice president, Lawrence Keane, said last week he did not expect it would be involved at all with the project.

"We think it's more important to focus on good-paying manufacturing jobs rather than creating part-time jobs for ticket-takers at a park," Keane said.

While the gun industry has been at odds with Connecticut officials, advocates of tighter gun control say they recognize Colt's historical significance and take no issue with devoting resources to the park project. Whether or not Colt takes a role in the project's development, Larson, who first began pursuing the idea 14 years ago, said he is sure it is a point of pride for the company.

Private investigator also sells gun-pouch purses

The News Tribune (Tacoma, Wash.)

TACOMA, Wash. — Hours into a surveillance, two private investigators sat in the front seat of a car when the man working alongside Paula Summers asked if the paper Starbucks sack between them held cookies.

"No," Summers said. "That's my gun."

Afterward, Summers realized there had to be a better way to carry her Walther PPK.

"I didn't know there were concealed weapons handbags," the Lakewood PI said. "I'd worked almost entirely with men on the job, and they certainly didn't know about them."

As it turns out, there are dozens of women's purses on the market that have pouches for carrying a gun. Summers flew to a Dallas trade show, where she introduced herself to the few companies making those purses.

Several weeks ago, Summers fired up a new website, gun-packs.com ("For women who pack heat"), and began selling concealed-weapon handbags online. She also has a small retail booth in Tacoma.

She has a lot of potential customers in her home state. Washington's rate of people with concealed-carry permits is higher than that in at least 30 other states. The Seattle Times reported this year, and the growth rate for women obtaining permits is double that of men.

Some 451,000 Washington residents are allowed to carry a hidden handgun almost anywhere they go, and more than 100,000 of them are women, the Times reported.

In nearly five years as a private investigator, Summers has often carried but never pulled a gun.

"The day before my concealed weapons permit test, I went to a gun range. I'd never fired my gun, didn't even know how to load it," she said. "I asked for help, and this guy with hair down to his belt line, who I thought looked a bit like a meth dealer, took the time to work with me."

"I probably spent five hours there learning the gun and how to

'I didn't know there were concealed weapons handbags. I'd worked almost entirely with men on the job, and they certainly didn't know about them.'

Paula Summers
gun handbag seller

shoot. I passed the test."

Should all women carry a gun? No, Summers said. But she wouldn't mind selling every woman a gun handbag.

"If you haven't taken a class, put something else in the pouch — maybe ninja throwing stars," said Summers, 62.

"If you're not prepared to deal with the consequences of using a gun, don't carry one," she said. "If you go out alone late at night, you should be packing."

"If you're going to carry, take a class, get your permit — and practice. Practice loading and unloading, practice handling the gun, and practice firing it," Summers said.

Her handbags go for anywhere from \$45 to \$999. Some have locking pouches. Most can conceal anything up to the size of a .45.

Selling them is a sideline for Summers, a Washington native who came late to the PI business.

Her business is called Maxwell-lade Inc.

Summers uses the upstairs of her home as an office, the basement as a supply room for handbags.

Recently, she added a blog to her handbag website.

A recent topic: How to find insurance that covers your expenses if you ever shoot a home intruder.

After all, if you're going to carry a gun in your purse, knowing who will pay to replace that blown-out window is probably good information to have.



PETER HALEY, THE NEWS TRIBUNE (TACOMA, WASH.)/AP

Private investigator Paula Summers, of Lakewood, Wash., shows one of the handbags that allow for the concealed carrying of a pistol.

NATION



PHOTOS BY CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Music students play mariachi music at the Richard Edwards Elementary School this month in Chicago. Chicago has joined dozens of school districts across the country that teach mariachi music in schools.

Musical memories

Families enjoy cultural link as group brings mariachi to several US schools

BY CARYN ROUSSEAU
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Jose Torres smiles as he thinks about how his 12-year-old daughter has embraced learning the same mariachi music he plays at home during a new Chicago Public Schools program that teaches the Mexican songs, linking the family's culture with the classroom.

"She's asking questions about her family, her background," Torres said, sitting outside Alexa's music classroom at Richard Edwards Elementary School, a largely Hispanic arts magnet school on Chicago's South Side. It's one of five Chicago schools with 1,100 students in the third through seventh grades that the nonprofit Mariachi Heritage Foundation debuted in this fall.

Chicago joins dozens of schools districts nationwide in cities including Las Vegas, San Antonio and Tucson, Ariz., that teach students how to sing and play mariachi music. It's a way to connect schools and parents from Hispanic communities, foundation president Cesar Maldonado said.

A traditional Mexican music, mariachi often is performed by groups of musicians playing stringed instruments and trumpets and wearing brightly colored costumes. The songs are both ballads and fast tempo, reflecting different, often rural regions of Mexico.



Gisselle Bahena practices her violin at the Richard Edwards Elementary School.

"It gives parents the opportunity to have a topic they can speak on," Maldonado said. "Let's use that as a platform to bring parents into the conversation of everyday academic life."

That was evident to music teacher Maria Pulido when the line was out her classroom door at this year's parent-teacher conferences.

"Last year, I never had any parents come talk to me," she said.

Pulido teaches mariachi students basic music skills on violins along with how to play Mexican folk songs. The program eventually will incorporate mariachi singing instruction.

"That's something the parents can say 'Wow, I know that song. I

used to sing that song when I was young,'" she said.

It's something Alexa Torres, 12, said she appreciates about mariachi music now too.

"I find it more interesting because I understand now what goes into it," she said.

But starting a mariachi program in a school isn't without challenges.

Marcia Neel, who helps organize mariachi programs in school districts around the country through her company, Music Education Consultants, said one issue is earning the same respect for mariachi music as orchestra or band programs.

"It should be offered with the same amount of weight," she said. "It just needs to be recognized as the legitimate art form that it really is. The key was to take mariachi from being an out-of-school thing and put it into the school day."

Finances also are a concern, said Maldonado, who started this first year in Chicago using \$300,000 in private and corporate donations. He bought 450 violins with the money. In January he hopes to buy more mariachi instruments, like trumpets and guitars, or bass guitars, and expand to seven more schools. Nearly 40 Chicago schools are on a waiting list.

"Until we get it to every school in the district that wants it we won't stop," he said.

NATION

Rat rods

Vintage vehicles transformed into rusty rides

The Associated Press

SAUGERTIES, N.Y. — Peter Duvalois' rat rods are way cooler than your car.

The fast machines, pieced together from vintage parts and scrapyard finds, also are rumblrier, rustier and turn more heads on the highway.

That's pretty much the point of rat rods, which look like post-apocalyptic hot rods. While both are generally low-slung and loud, rat rods wear their rust proudly and never touch a buff cloth. Duvalois is among a horde of gear heads expressing their affection for vintage vehicles by rearranging them into something both new and old looking.

"I'm not particularly interested in how fast the truck will go," Duvalois said with a laugh. "I'm interested in how cool it looks getting there."

Duvalois is building a rat rod based on an orange 1935 Ford

I'm not particularly interested in how fast the truck will go. I'm interested in how cool it looks getting there.'

Peter Duvalois
rat rod enthusiast

public works truck at his garage, called the Rat's Nest, about 90 miles north of New York City. The 63-year-old retiree has raced stock cars and built hot rods, but he likes the more easygoing vibe of the rat rod crowd.

Rat rods have been around for decades. Some say the name stems from hot rodders dismissing the "ratty" looks of other cars. While there is no formal definition, many have low clearances,

open wheels and round headlights flanking old-school grilles. Volume counts, too.

A rat rod is simply a blue-collar hot rod, argues Rat Rod Magazine editor Steve Thiemert.

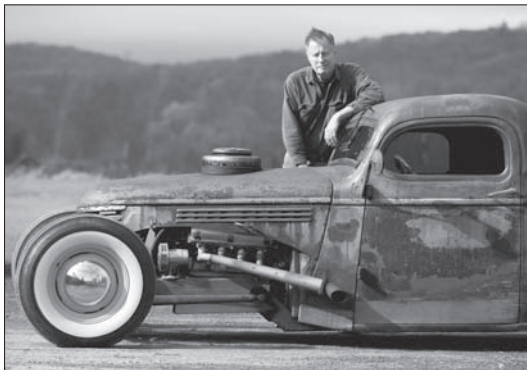
"We're returning to the roots of hot rodding, basically, where you're trying to build something cool with what you had," Thiemert said. "You wanted it to be fast and you wanted it to be loud and aggressive, and it didn't have to be perfect. It was a poor man's entry into hot rodding."

Duvalois' current rat rod project should be ready to roll by the August gathering. The public works truck from the nearby City of Kingston is chopped down, shortened and has a 1950 Olds Rocket engine under the hood. Duvalois doesn't use blueprints; he uses paper cutouts and temporarily tacks the vehicle together to make sure it all fits.

This is the fourth rat rod Duvalois has created in seven years. His first was built from a 1946 Chevy pickup a friend was going to scrap. The friend said there wasn't much left, and Duvalois replied that's just what he wanted. He combined the hood, cab and grille from the old Chevy with a 1952 Dodge V8 engine, a Camaro 5-speed transmission and other pieces.



Peter Duvalois drives one of his rat rods near his shop, call the Rat's Nest, in Saugerties, N.Y.



PHOTOS BY MIKE GROLL/AP

Above: A limited edition decal is attached to the tailgate of Duvalois' rat rod.

Left: Duvalois poses with his car.



Duvalois' current project is a public works truck from the nearby city of Kingston, N.Y., which is chopped down, shortened and has a 1950 Olds Rocket engine under the hood. It's the fourth rat rod he's created in seven years.

NATION



PHOTOS BY BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

A sign hangs in front of the soon-to-move Breckenridge Cannabis Club, which sells recreational marijuana products, on Dec. 11 on the main commercial street that runs through the ski town of Breckenridge, Colo.

Resort towns worry over pot perception

By KRISTEN WYATT
The Associated Press

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. — Business is booming in Colorado's mountain resorts, and the addition of recreational marijuana stores this year has attracted customers curious about legalized pot. But there's mounting anxiety that ski towns have embraced stoner culture a little too much, potentially damaging the state's tourism brand.

That worry flared up in two resort towns this month. In Breckenridge, residents voted overwhelmingly to force downtown's lone dispensary off Main Street to a less visible location. Just up the road in Granby, town officials used a property annex to prevent the first dispensary from opening there.

The fear is that some families — a mainstay of the ski tourism industry — will stop vacationing here.

"It's not a morality issue, or that we think marijuana is bad," said Breckenridge Councilman Gary Gallagher, who supported legal marijuana but also voted to force the Breckenridge Cannabis Club out of downtown. "Marijuana, it is not in this country's DNA yet. It's a little bit too early."

So far, there's no indication that legal pot has damaged tourism, Colorado's No. 2 industry. The state notched a record \$17.3 billion in tourism spending the year after legalization, with a record 64.6 million visitors, and state tourism officials say 2014 is poised to top last year's record.

But it's an open question whether pot has anything to do with it. Officials cite the improving economy and the weather, with healthy snow totals historically being the

most significant driver for mountain visits.

The state and its marijuana industry are barred by law from advertising weed out of state, and the head of the Colorado Tourism Office says the state isn't tracking the role of marijuana in tourist behavior.

"It's all anecdotal," Al White said. "I have heard from some angry parents who said they'll never come back to Colorado because of marijuana. And I've also heard from people who say they came to Colorado just to see the marijuana."

"At the end of the day, it may be having a modest effect, but it's not huge either way."

The recent friction isn't the first time officials have moved to lower marijuana's profile.

The nation's largest ski operator, Vail Resorts, made headlines during the past year tearing down makeshift shelters built illicitly in hard-to-reach areas and used by stoners to "get safe," mountain slang for taking up out of the cold and away from ski patrollers. Resorts across the state are dotted with the so-called smoke shacks, and some of them are decades old.

"We will continue to communicate that consumption of marijuana is illegal in public and on federal land," Vail Resorts' Russ Pecoraro said in a statement about destroying the shacks in its four areas — Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone and Vail.

Still, at rates greater than their urban neighbors, mountain communities backed marijuana legalization in 2012, including Breckenridge, an early and enthusiastic support base, and there's no doubt that recreational pot has had an effect on ski towns.

A state-produced July report on the



Snowboarders ride a lift in Breckenridge. In some quarters, there's anxiety that ski towns have embraced marijuana a little too much.

new marijuana industry concluded that 90 percent of recreational sales in mountain resort communities go to out-of-state visitors.

The influx of shoppers — and camera crews that have become frequent sights as they work on pot-themed news stories and documentaries — has prompted a lively debate among residents about how pot is changing their resorts.

"Whether you're pro-marijuana or against marijuana, you have to be concerned about how tourists react to seeing it," said Bob Gordan, a Breckenridge retiree who voted to move the dispensary.

Others say the marijuana novelty will die down naturally and that resort towns shouldn't worry about dispensaries or the souvenir shops that put "Rocky Mountain High" puns on T-shirts.

"In five or 10 years, it'll be no big issue," said Bill Kiser, a Breckenridge retiree who voted to keep the dispensary on Main Street.

"Why don't families get turned off when they go on vacation and see a bar and people drinking alcohol? Because they're used to it," Kiser said. "People will eventually get used to this, too."

Colorado set to fund research on marijuana

By KRISTEN WYATT
The Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado will spend more than \$8 million researching marijuana's medical potential — a new frontier because government-funded marijuana research traditionally focuses on the drug's negative health effects.

The grants awarded by the Colorado Board of Health will go to studies on whether marijuana helps treat epilepsy, brain tumors, Parkinson's disease and post-traumatic stress disorder. Some of the studies still need federal approval.

Though the awards are relatively small, researchers say they're a big step forward. While several other federal studies currently in the works look at marijuana's health effects, all the Colorado studies are focused on whether marijuana actually helps.

"This is the first time we've had government money to look at the efficacy of marijuana, not the harms of marijuana," said Dr. Suzanne Sisley, a Scottsdale, Ariz., psychiatrist who will help run a study on marijuana for veterans with PTSD. Sisley plans to do her research in private practice after previously working for the University of Arizona.

Federal approval to study marijuana's medical potential requires permission of the Food and Drug Administration, the Drug Enforcement Administration and either the National Institutes of Health or the Department of Health and Human Services. There's only one legal source of the weed — the Marijuana Research Project at the University of Mississippi.

Twenty-three states and Washington, D.C., allow marijuana use by people with various medical conditions. But under federal law, pot is considered a drug with no medical use and doctors cannot prescribe it.

Dr. Larry Wolk, Colorado's chief medical officer, said the lack of research on marijuana's medical value leaves sick people guessing about how pot may help them and what doses to take.

"There's nowhere else in medicine where we give a patient some seeds and say, 'Go grow this and process it and then figure out how much you need,'" Wolk said. "We need research dollars so we can answer more questions."

Three of the eight research projects, including the veterans study, will still need federal clearance and access to the Ole Miss marijuana. The other five are "observational studies," meaning the subjects will be providing their own weed.

Among the projects proposed:

■ Two separate studies on using marijuana to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (\$3.1 million).

■ Whether adolescents and young adults with irritable bowel syndrome benefit from marijuana (\$1.2 million).

■ Using marijuana to relieve pain in children with brain tumors (\$1 million).

■ How an oil derived from marijuana plants affects pediatric epilepsy patients (\$524,000).

■ Comparing marijuana and oxycodone for pain relief (\$472,000).

The money is coming from Colorado's medical marijuana patient fees, not Colorado's new taxes on recreational pot.

FAITH



JOSIE LEFE, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/TNS

Meredith Phillips, left, and Carolyn Barnes walk around the outdoor labyrinth at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., in early December. Walking labyrinths is considered meditative, contemplative and restorative. Some labyrinths are permanent and others are portable.

Walking in circles for a sense of direction

By ANGELA HILL
The Oakland (Calif.) Tribune

Let's get this straight. A labyrinth is not a maze, and a maze is not a labyrinth.

A maze has walls, blind alleys and dead ends — and you can get frustrated and confused and lost and end up (spoiler alert) frozen in the snow like Jack Nicholson in “The Shining.” Or attacked by cursed hedges and sucked through a magical portal to encounter (Dark Lord alert) a reconstituted Voldemort in Harry Potter. Or, at the very least, get stuck for hours amid corny twists and turns in a maize maze (and reality alert) end up calling 911 from your cellphone to get out.

But, relax, none of those things will happen in a labyrinth. Mainly because you're not really in one so much as on one. There are typically no walls — just one path laid out flat on the ground, a route that twists back and forth before reaching a circular space in the center. Once there, you pause, ponder and then,

well, you go back the way you came. One way in, one way out. So you can't get lost. No dead ends. No stress.

Labyrinths are an ancient mystical tradition found in many religions. Some say they symbolize the journey of life from birth to spiritual awakening. Walking a labyrinth is considered meditative, contemplative, restorative — you know, the opposite of our competitive, exhaustive and expensive existence during the holidays.

Many are indeed in religious settings, such as the two at Grace Cathedral on San Francisco's Nob Hill. You can visit the serpentine paths, both the indoor and outdoor versions, any day, or opt for the candlelight walks held monthly. Some are in parks. Others are at medical facilities. There's a labyrinth painted on the concrete outside the California Pacific Medical Center's Pacific campus, provided so patients and families can find moments of peace. There's even a portable one at Stanford University's Memorial Church — they roll it out in the chapel area for weekly walks.

I'd never walked a labyrinth before, but my big sister does so regularly and feels the experience calms her thoughts

and reveals inspiration from the cosmos. So I met her a couple of weeks ago at the lovely outdoor labyrinth at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto, Calif. Red-and-gold pavers form the pattern in front of the chapel, set amid gardens and eucalyptus just steps off the residential street.

I was early for our date and admittedly tense, thanks to traffic battles and a looming deadline. So I hoped the meditative effect would kick in — and pronto! So before my sis got there I walked the circuitous path, speeding through it in about 45 seconds. I didn't see the appeal. Clearly I was doing it wrong.

“It's not a raceway!” my sis joked upon arrival.

Instead, she explained, one of the ways to use a labyrinth is to go in with a question in your mind, walking slowly, focusing on gentle breathing. Then pause when you get to the center to welcome vision or guidance. Some people sit down in the center. Some even dance. Then you turn around and slowly walk the path on the return trip.

“The journey out is just as important,” my sis said, “an opportunity to reflect on what you've experienced.”



ANDA CHU, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/TNS

An outdoor labyrinth at a hospital in San Leandro, Calif.

The whole process can take 20 minutes or more.

So we proceeded. My sister went first, closing her eyes to ponder a question. I tried, but could only come up with a query on what I should have for lunch. Then we walked. No, strolled. No, ambled. Slowly but surely reaching the center and then standing still for a minute or two, taking deep breaths, then heading back out.

And I did feel more relaxed, refreshed. And I knew I wanted a slice of pumpkin-chocolate cake at a place down the street. Our spiritual journey continued there. It was amazing.



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WIRED WORLD

Calling | Reviewing the 15 worst Internet hoaxes of 2014

SHENANIGANS!



By CAITLIN DEWEY
The Washington Post

If 2013 was “the year of the viral hoax,” what then should we call 2014 — a year slightly older, slightly wiser and even more full of moronic shenanigans?

This was the year, after all, that saw the rise of the fake news industry: a cynical (and profitable!) enterprise that churns out convincing hoax-news for clicks. This was also, arguably, the year that properly ushered in the worst of the

bogus fact/photo Twitter accounts, a la @UberFacts or @HistoryInPics. And that’s not even getting into the pranks, the “viral” attention-seeking and the outright bald-faced lies — made for infamy, LOLs or some other purpose we will never know.

So this year, at least, we shan’t make the mistake of declaring the “viral hoax” a 2014 fad. But as 2015 approaches, maybe we can look back and learn from the past year’s mistakes? In that spirit, here’s our survey of 2014’s most viral, and outrageous, Internet fakes.

2 **4chan didn’t leak Emma Watson’s nudes.** Let’s be clear: 4chan was responsible for a lot of other shenanigans this year. But when a threatening website went up in the wake of fall’s “Fapping” promising to leak nude photos of actress Emma Watson in revenge for a feminist speech she made at the United Nations, the Internet’s most infamous message board was not actually to blame. Instead, both the website and the threat

were publicity stunts by an Internet “marketing” company called Rantic, which remains in operation today. Rantic’s business model is fairly sketchy — it sells fake Web traffic, as well as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter likes — but the company’s reps have said that the motives behind the Emma Watson hoax were pure. “It was a psychological study, mate,” one man told Vocativ. And a bid for free publicity, which definitely worked.



4 **Bikers did not “surrender” the Brooklyn Bridge to pedestrians.** Remember those mysterious white flags that appeared on the Brooklyn Bridge over the summer? They were placed there, apparently, by a duo of German artists who have a long history of vaguely illegal public art. But before the artists admitted to their work, a parody Twitter account called @BicycleLobby tricked half of Twitter, several media outlets and the NYPD into thinking the flags had something to do with cyclists. Needless to say,

they did not. (The artists describe the flags as a celebration of “public space.”) And despite the NYPD’s attempts to subpoena and expose the people behind the account in connection with the bridge incident, @BicycleLobby keeps tweeting blithely on. As of this writing, the account’s on a #bikemusical bender.



5 **A disfigured 3-year-old was not kicked out of a Mississippi KFC.** In a shameless grab for money/attention, a Mississippi family claimed in early June that they were asked to leave a KFC franchise because their daughter’s facial scarring “scared” customers. They were almost definitely making the incident up. Multiple investigations by the restaurant chain found no evidence the family was even at KFC when they said they were. Still, the little girl’s injuries were very real — she was mauled by pitbulls earlier in the year — and concerned donors didn’t hold the hoax against her. A surgery foundation on behalf of KFC, along with several other donors, have performed a series of facial reconstruction surgeries on Victoria for free. So as far as stupid hoaxes goes, this one has a pretty happy ending.

3 **That super-viral “drunk girl” video was staged.** This was a big year for “social experiment” videos — or it would have been, if some of the so-called experiments weren’t actually faked. “Drunk Girl in Public,” one of the more popular follow-ups to the Hollaback! group’s original catcalling video, was particularly egregious in that regard. Its creator, who claimed to have captured a bunch of creeps approaching a pretty drunk girl as she tottered around L.A., had actually coached the men into acting that way. In the backlash that followed — which included an apology from the video’s actress, Jennifer Box — filmmaker Stephen Zhang quietly changed the video’s title to “Drunk Girl in Public (Awareness Skit)” and disabled comments on the clip. His company, Stephen Zhang Productions, continues to turn out feel-inducing, socially aware videos; its most recent was called “Helping the Homeless with Thanksgiving Cheer.”

6 **Justin Bieber did not save a Russian man from a bear.** In early August, dozens of media outlets ran with the incredible tale of a Russian man saved from mauling when his Justin Bieber ringtone went off, scaring the bear away. Alas, the Bieber angle appears to have been fiction. When Poynter’s Craig Silverman dug into the story, he found that it was added by the questionable English-language news site Austrian Times in translation, and didn’t appear in the original Russian accounts. Alas, few outlets have corrected the Bieber reference, and both the Austrian Times and its parent company, Central European News, continue to serve as feeding ground for the world’s least discerning tabloids. Its most popular stories, as of this writing, involve a Romanian woman stabbed with a screwdriver, an SUV that almost fell into a sinkhole in China, and a 12-year-old who sustained a freak chopstick accident. All three stories were picked up by the likes of England’s Daily Mirror and Daily Mail.



WIRED WORLD

7 A "Miracle Machine" can't actually turn water into wine.

Late last winter, two wine industry heavyweights claimed to have invented a "Miracle Machine" that could ferment wine quickly in the comfort of your home. As its creators eventually revealed, however — to the disappointment of the hundreds of journalists who covered the so-called invention — the product was actually a publicity stunt for the charity Wine to Water, which sells wine to fund clean-water projects in Haiti, Ethiopia and six other countries.

The stunt was, admittedly, annoying ("if you think lying to people is the right way to go about charity ... go to hell," wrote one YouTube commenter) but it also did its job. Only weeks after the Miracle Machine went viral, Wine to Water's donations were up 20 percent. The nonprofit celebrated its 10-year anniversary last week; in that time, it's provided more than a quarter of a million people with clean water.

**9** There is no social network for drunk people. "Livr," a

Breathalyzer-unlocked iPhone app and "global network of similarly buzzed people," captivated tech forums and reporters early in the year with a slick corporate website and promo video claiming the start-up would launch soon. Within a span of days, of course, skeptics had begun to poke holes in the story — Breathalyzers are really expensive, for starters — and a pair of Brooklyn creatives copied the hoax. Brandon Schmitt and Brandon Bloch had invented the app, they later said, as a sort of performance piece examining the absurdity of tech culture. (Further proof of said absurdity: Several early reports on the glory of Livr have still not been corrected or taken down.)

**11** A bird did not poop on Vladimir Putin. Speaking of

Russia, a strangely satisfying video that whizzed around YouTube in early August appeared to show a bird taking revenge on Russia's president as he unveiled a monument in Moscow. Alas, Russian versions of the footage show Putin finishing his speech on the dangers of war with his suit jacket and his dignity intact.

The edited clip seems to have originated with the YouTube channel "PresTVNews1," which specializes in frequent and questionably factual videos from the conflict in Ukraine. In the months since the bird-pooing-Putin stunt, the channel has continued uploading a steady, near-constant stream of more serious videos from the war. Most recently, it's published several clips that allegedly show convoys and armed combat in Donetsk.

8 Alex from Target was not a marketing hoax. This one is, needless to say, a bit of a puzzler. The

hoax, in this case, was someone crying hoax ... when the Internet meme in question (Alex Lee, an attractive teenage Target employee) actually happened all on his own. #AlexfromTarget, you may recall, became a teen Internet sensation at the beginning of November, when a couple of girls snapped his photo as he cashed them out at Target. The photo, once tweeted, took off across the boundless depths of One Direction Twitter, where hundreds of thousands of girls soon christened Alex their heartthrob du jour.

This was a genuine, organic, people-powered phenomenon — something that doesn't often happen on the Internet these days. But one marketing company, apparently determined to get in on the Alex action, insisted it had actually orchestrated Alex's virality via some secret network of Twitter-famous people. To

make a long story short, the Twitter-famous people denied any involvement, Alex said he's never heard of the marketing company, Breakr, and said company quickly dialed down its claims/faded into the Internet shadows. Per its Twitter, Breakr is still in "beta" and hasn't done much of anything since then.

Alex, on the other hand, is a bona fide, verified Twitter celebrity — just last week, he signed on to tour with CreaTour, a sort of festival circuit for teenage Internet stars. As of last month, he was still working the Target gig, but maybe that'll change.

**10** Wolves did not wander the halls of athletes' dorms

at the Olympic Games. While it feels like the Sochi Games happened eons ago — particularly in light of all the Russian drama that's transpired in that time — the Olympics and their annoying, obvious Jimmy Kimmel hoax went down just in February. Toward the end of the games, Olympic luger Kate Hansen tweeted a video that, she said, showed a wolf wandering through her dorm; in reality, of course, the stunt was filmed for the Jimmy Kimmel show. (Despite the popularity of clips like this one and the infamous "twerking fail," it would seem that Kimmel's since cooled on this kind of hoax.) In either case, we prefer to remember Hansen for her other, more honest moment of Olympic virality: She also became something of an Internet sensation for jamming to Beyoncé during her warm-up routine.

**12** Earth did not, and will not, suffer

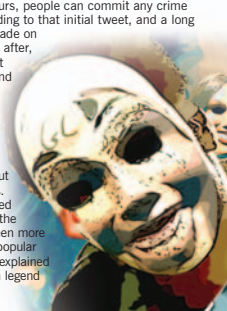
six days of "total darkness." In one of the more improbable fake-news stories to gain widespread traction this year, the hoax site Huzlers published an article that claimed a solar storm would block out the sun Dec. 16-22. Needless to say, as of Dec. 19 no one was stumbling around with their iPhone flashlights on. Still, the fake article proved so popular — and the rumors were repeated so many times on social media and in foreign outlets — that in late October NASA took the highly unusual step of addressing it directly.

"Contrary to what you may have read or heard," a representative for the agency's Earth Observatory wrote in a Facebook post, "NASA has in no way issued any statement regarding 3 (or 6) days of darkness in December due to a solar storm. All these rumors are absolutely false."

The Earth Observatory has since dedicated itself to sharing more important information, like what Christmas lights look like from space. Huzlers, predictably, remains one of the Internet's most-wanted in the realm of terrible fake news.

13 Lawless, amoral teens did not riot in cities across the

U.S. The so-called "Louisville Purge" sounds like a bad movie plot ... because it is. The rumor, which began with a "joke" tweet from a Louisville teen in mid-August, was ripped directly from the 2013 horror movie "The Purge" — in which, for 12 hours, people can commit any crime without consequences. According to that initial tweet, and a long series of copycat messages made on Twitter and Reddit for months after, teens across the country spent much of 2014 plotting theft and murder sprees of their own. Needless to say, the appointed date came and went in each place without consequence. Louisville Police investigated the original tweeter at the center of the "Purge" rumors, but ultimately did not press charges. The teen, who was not identified publicly, said he was sorry for the hoax. Police elsewhere have been more laissez-faire. "The Purge" is a popular horror movie, Alabama police explained on Facebook. "This is an urban legend and is not a credible threat."

**14-15** Macaulay Culkin and Betty White

are both still alive. This year enjoyed its fair share of death hoaxes, but these two had to be the best. In September, the fake news site Empire News published a story about "Betty White dying" — as in, dying her hair — and fooled some 2 million people into mourning the actress. Meanwhile, some two months later, MSNBC website, a tricky newcomer to the fake-news space, claimed that 34-year-old former child star Macaulay Culkin was found dead.

Both White and Culkin are actually OK, of course. White, who is nearing her 93rd birthday, still stars in the TV Land sitcom "Hot in Cleveland" (and drinks gin-and-tonics, apparently). Culkin is on tour with his band Pizza Underground.

BMW X4: Output in kW (hp): 230-135 (313-184). Fuel consumption in l/100 km (urban/extra urban/combined): 10.7-5.9*/6.9-4.7*/8.3-5.2*. CO₂ emissions in g/km (combined): 193-136*. Fuel consumption figures are based on the EU test cycle.
* Lowest value is achieved with the special equipment SA 24M 17" light alloy wheels Streamline style 306 (equipment subject to an additional price).

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FACES

Benedict Cumberbatch has a genius for multitasking

By JOE WILLIAMS
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

How smart is Benedict Cumberbatch? Smart enough to remember which project he's promoting.

In a recent phone interview, the busy British actor acknowledges that it is hard to segue among publicity for the TV series "Sherlock" (on BBC since 2010), the animated film "Penguins of Madagascar" (which opened last month), the third Hobbit film (for which he reprised the voice of the dragon Smaug) and the dramatic thriller "The Imitation Game."

And heaven forbid a reporter should quiz him about his rumored roles in the upcoming "Doctor Strange" and Star Wars movies.

"It's been like this for a couple years," he says. He also has to find time to plan a wedding to actress Sophie Hunter. "After this interview, I have to do a chi-chi photo shoot for Vanity Fair. It's all so extraordinary. But I'm managing to enjoy it still, which is the main thing."

Asked if he can name a new movie in which he is not involved, the multitasking star answers like the literal-minded computer whiz he plays in "The Imitation Game": "Yes."

Pressed to elaborate, Cumberbatch mentions "The Theory of Everything," in which Eddie Redmayne stars as physicist Stephen Hawking. But that's a trick answer. Cumberbatch portrayed Hawking in a British TV movie a decade ago.

Cumberbatch hopes that his friend Hawking will be able enough to attend the Academy Award ceremony on Feb. 22, where both Redmayne and Cumberbatch are likely to be nominees. "But I know Alan Turing won't be there," Cumberbatch says, steering the conversation back to his own new movie.

Turing was a world-class mathematician, a war hero and a gay icon. Yet in his lifetime, few people knew his name. During World War II, he was recruited as a code breaker. To crack the Nazis' encrypted communications, he built what is considered to be the world's first digital computer.

It's hardly the first time that Cumberbatch, 38, has been cast as an eccentric genius. Besides Sherlock Holmes, he has played Wikileaks hacker Julian Assange in "The Fifth Estate," an intelligence agent in "Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy," the extraterrestrial Khan in "Star Trek: Into Darkness" and Vincent van Gogh in a TV movie called "Van Gogh: Painted With Words."

Yet he speaks with a special fondness for Turing, who was a socially awkward and closeted gay man in an era when homosexuality was a crime. In 1952, Turing was convicted of indecency and sentenced to chemical castration.

Two years later he was dead, a presumed suicide at age 41.

"He basically won us the war," says Cumberbatch. "He broke an unbreakable code, and in the process he laid the foundation for binary computing. Because of him, computers around the world can talk to each other. We should never forget that the first computers were called Turing machines. The Internet couldn't exist without this man."

"I'm just a layperson with an amateur interest in science, but to carry on learning is one of the great joys of my job. So now I've got this megaphone, and I want to shout from the rooftops about Alan Turing, because that's something he wouldn't have done for himself. Had he publicized his early work on algorithms, he would have been up there with Newton and Darwin. But he just wasn't interested in personal acclaim."

"He was all about the work. And that's a quality I admire."



The Weinstein Company

Benedict Cumberbatch stars in "The Imitation Game," above. Cumberbatch attended the film's premiere with fiancée Sophie Hunter, at top, in New York last month.

PHOTOS BY EVAN AGOSTINI, INVISION/AP

Rep says Helena Bonham Carter and Tim Burton have split

The Associated Press

Longtime partners Helena Bonham Carter and Tim Burton have separated.

A spokesman for Bonham Carter confirmed Tuesday that the couple split earlier this year.

Publist Melody Korenbrodt says the two separated amicably "and have continued to be friends and co-parent their children." She asked for privacy for the couple and their son and daughter.

Though Bonham Carter and Burton never married, they be-

came creative and romantic partners after he directed her in 2001's "Planet of the Apes." Their other credits together include "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street," "Alice in Wonderland" and "Dark Shadows."

Burton's latest film is "Big Eyes."

Clint Eastwood and his wife finalize divorce

Clint Eastwood and his wife of 18 years have finalized their

divorce.

A Monterey County, Calif., Superior Court judge finalized the Eastwoods' divorce Tuesday and approved a judgment that does not state how the pair will divide their assets.

The Oscar-winning director's wife filed for divorce in October 2013, citing irreconcilable differences. The Eastwoods have been married since March 1996.

They have one daughter together. She turned 18 years old this month.

Star faces trial over throwing punch

Columbus Short was ordered to stand trial on a felony battery charge after a witness testified that the former "Scandal" actor delivered a running punch on a man who wasn't looking his direction.

Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner Mark Zuckman ruled Tuesday that prosecutors had shown enough evidence to support the charge, but expressed



Burton and Bonham Carter

doubts about the credibility of some of the testimony from the man Short attacked.

Short struck Fenton Hyché III in the parking lot of a Los Angeles bar on March 15. Hyché suffered a concussion and fractured eye socket after arguing with Short.

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chattanooga	50	32	Clwy	Fort Wayne	38	31	Cldy	Louisville	45	33	Cldy	Pocatello	32	16	Snow	Shreveport	59	44	Clwy
Alexia, Texas	60	42	Snow	Cheney	34	12	Cldy	Fresno	53	37	Clwy	Cir Lubbock	63	36	PCldy	Portland, Maine	57	34	Rain	Sioux City	42	27	PCldy
Albany, N.Y.	48	32	Snow	Chickasaw	34	12	Clwy	Chico	40	24	Clwy	Chico	40	24	Clwy	Portland, Ore.	57	34	Rain	Spokane	47	31	Clwy
Albuquerque	51	27	PCldy	Cincinnati	43	32	Rain	Grand Junction	35	20	Snow	Madison	39	32	Cldy	Providence	58	35	Rain	Spokane	37	31	Clwy
Albany, N.Y.	51	27	PCldy	Cleveland	40	32	Rain	Grand Rapids	36	31	Clwy	Medford	42	30	Snow	Pueblo	52	17	Rain	Tulsa	31	21	Clwy
Amarillo	51	27	PCldy	Greensboro	50	32	Clwy	Greensboro	50	32	Clwy	Memphis	43	30	PCldy	Rochester, N.Y.	52	30	Snow	Uniontown, Ill.	50	37	Clwy
Amarillo	51	27	PCldy	Columbia, S.C.	58	32	Clwy	Green Bay	36	31	Clwy	Miami Beach	76	67	Cldy	Rapid City	31	13	Snow	Springfield, Mo.	50	37	Clwy
Anchorage	28	25	Snow	Columbus, Ga.	56	36	Clwy	Greensboro, N.C.	57	33	Clwy	Midland-Olesea	63	35	PCldy	Reynolds	34	21	PCldy	Syracuse	45	32	Clwy
Anchorage	28	25	Snow	Dayton	41	31	Clwy	Greensboro, N.C.	57	33	Clwy	Midland-Olesea	63	35	PCldy	Rochester, N.Y.	52	30	Snow	Tulsa	31	21	Clwy
Atlanta	53	35	Snow	Concord, N.H.	53	31	Rain	Hartford Spgld	58	34	Rain	Mpls-St. Paul	36	28	Cldy	Roanoke	52	33	PCldy	Tampa	67	53	PCldy
Atlanta	53	35	Snow	Crisfield	40	32	Clwy	Honolulu	60	48	Clwy	Honolulu	60	48	Clwy	San Jose	57	35	Snow	Tampa	67	53	PCldy
Austin	62	49	Snow	Dallas-Ft. Worth	60	48	Clwy	Honolulu	60	48	Clwy	Mobile	57	41	Cir	Rockford	40	31	Cldy	Tucson	67	53	PCldy
Baltimore	52	34	PCldy	Dayton	41	31	Clwy	Houston	63	54	PCldy	Monterey	57	35	Snow	Sacramento	56	38	Cldy	Tucson	67	53	PCldy
Baltimore	52	34	PCldy	Dayton	41	31	Clwy	Houston	63	54	PCldy	Monterey	57	35	Snow	Sacramento	56	38	Cldy	Tucson	67	53	PCldy
Billings	29	8	Snow	Denver	40	15	Clwy	Indianapolis	39	33	Snow	New Orleans	64	34	PCldy	St. Petersburg	66	57	Cldy	Tulsa	31	21	Clwy
Birmingham	53	35	Snow	Des Moines	44	34	PCldy	Jackson, Miss.	56	39	Snow	New York City	63	36	Cldy	St. Thomas	86	76	PCldy	Waco	60	47	PCldy
Birmingham	53	35	Snow	Des Moines	44	34	PCldy	Jackson, Miss.	56	39	Snow	New York City	63	36	Cldy	St. Thomas	86	76	PCldy	Waco	60	47	PCldy
Boston	37	22	PCldy	Duluth	33	24	Clwy	Juneau	36	33	Snow	Norfolk, Va.	60	38	Cldy	Salt Lake City	33	21	Snow	W. Palm Beach	74	65	Clwy
Boston	37	22	PCldy	Duluth	33	24	Clwy	Juneau	36	33	Snow	Norfolk, Va.	60	38	Cldy	Salt Lake City	33	21	Snow	W. Palm Beach	74	65	Clwy
Brick	60	36	Rain	El Paso	64	42	Clwy	Kansas City	48	36	Clwy	North Platte	41	17	PCldy	San Angelo	61	42	Cldy	Wichita	53	41	PCldy
Brownsville	73	60	Rain	El Paso	64	42	Clwy	Kansas City	48	36	Clwy	North Platte	41	17	PCldy	San Angelo	61	42	Cldy	Wichita	53	41	PCldy
Brownsville	73	60	Rain	El Paso	64	42	Clwy	Kansas City	48	36	Clwy	North Platte	41	17	PCldy	San Angelo	61	42	Cldy	Wichita	53	41	PCldy
Buffalo	60	36	Rain	El Paso	64	42	Clwy	Kansas City	48	36	Clwy	North Platte	41	17	PCldy	San Angelo	61	42	Cldy	Wichita	53	41	PCldy
Burlington, Vt.	47	37	Cldy	Evansville	45	35	PCldy	Lansing	37	31	Cldy	Pasadena	47	36	Cir	San Jose	57	35	Snow	Yakima	37	26	Snow
Burlington, Vt.	47	37	Cldy	Evansville	45	35	PCldy	Lansing	37	31	Cldy	Pasadena	47	36	Cir	San Jose	57	35	Snow	Yakima	37	26	Snow
Carolina, Maine	49	30	Rain	Fairbanks	11	5	Clwy	Las Vegas	51	35	Clwy	Pendleton	37	27	PCldy	San Juan, P.R.	82	71	PCldy	Youngstown	40	29	PCldy
Carolina, Maine	49	30	Rain	Fairbanks	11	5	Clwy	Las Vegas	51	35	Clwy	Pendleton	37	27	PCldy	San Juan, P.R.	82	71	PCldy	Youngstown	40	29	PCldy
Charleston, S.C.	59	39	PCldy	Flagstaff	34	11	Clwy	Little Rock	47	32	PCldy	Philadelphia	53	35	Cldy	St. Marie	34	27	Cldy				
Charleston, S.C.	59	39	PCldy	Flagstaff	34	11	Clwy	Little Rock	47	32	PCldy	Philadelphia	53	35	Cldy	St. Marie	34	27	Cldy				
Charleston, W.Va.	49	28	Clwy	Glenn	38	30	Clwy	Lincoln	53	40	Clwy	Phoenix	61	41	PCldy	Savannah	59	40	Cldy				
Charleston, W.Va.	49	28	Clwy	Glenn	38	30	Clwy	Lincoln	53	40	Clwy	Phoenix	61	41	PCldy	Savannah	59	40	Cldy				
Chicago	50	32	Snow	Hamlet	31	17	Clwy	Little Rock	47	32	PCldy	Pittsburgh	50	34	Clwy	St. Louis	54	34	PCldy				

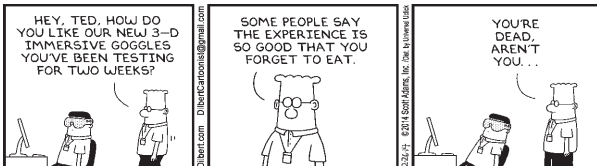
National temperature extremes

Hi: Tue, 87, Point Mugu, Calif.

Frazz



Dilbert



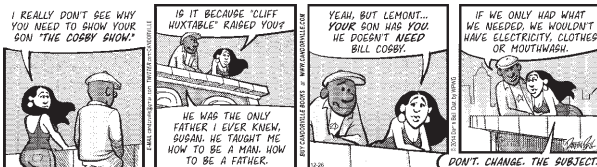
Pearls Before Swine



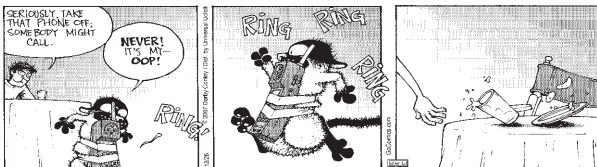
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Candorville



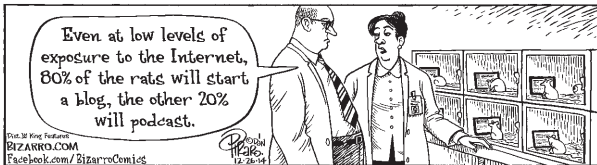
Get Fuzzy



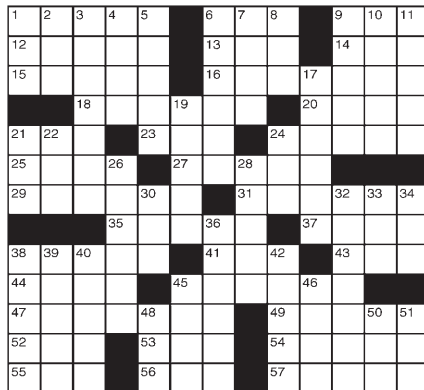
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Went on four tours
- 6 Uncultured
- 9 Ozone depleter, for short
- 12 Boggy backwater
- 13 Locale of Anytown
- 14 Hasten
- 15 Relieve
- 16 Arcade game
- 18 Employers
- 20 Hot dog holder
- 21 Bake sale org.
- 23 Had lunch
- 24 Reacts to yeast
- 25 Kansas city
- 27 Invited
- 29 "The — Girls"
- 31 Slow passage
- 35 "Star Wars" bad-die

- 54 Nome dome home
- 55 Away from WSW
- 56 Possess
- 57 Lost color

- 22 Additionally
- 24 Roulette bet
- 26 "How, when or where" word
- 28 Actress Black
- 30 Corrode
- 32 Sweet sphere
- 33 Worldwide workers' org.
- 34 Antiquated
- 36 Writer Waugh
- 38 Photoshopper
- 39 Auto style
- 40 Marsh plant
- 42 Dutch bloom
- 45 Huffed and puffed
- 46 Ginormous
- 48 Commotion
- 50 Shad product
- 51 Affirmative action?

DOWN

- 1 "Survivor" airer
- 2 Knock
- 3 Evaluate visually
- 4 Horseback game
- 5 Oklahoma city
- 6 Money of India
- 7 Unrepaired
- 8 Ashen
- 9 Complete disorder
- 10 Grenoble girl
- 11 Honeycomb compartments
- 17 Wedding-related
- 19 Rise
- 21 Glutton

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-26

CRYPTOQUIP

K A F C F H G C R P F C F B K L G Q Y

D A F Q F Z I R ' Q F X J Y F X Z K I V J B H

H I O F B P I V V G P K - P L J B B J B S

Q J H F P : H J O O Z D I Q X H .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN LATE DECEMBER, I BELIEVE NEW ZEALAND'S NATIVE DENIZENS WISH EACH OTHER "MAORI CHRISTMAS!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals Y

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OPINION

Americans' love of snacks goes beyond food

By DANIEL AKST

Symbols matter, which is why it's important to acknowledge that our trust national emblem isn't an eagle or a dollar sign or even a handgun, though each will have its proponents.

No, I see a partially unwrapped Twinkie, draped alluringly in cellophane, surrounded by sports drinks. Or a take-out pizza studded with Fritos, a single slice drawn forth with strings of cheese still connecting it to the pie as a metaphor for our shared devotion to fat.

Our national symbol, in other words, really ought to be a snack. Once a rare treat associated with special events such as fairs or birthday parties, snacking is now something akin to a national sport. In a recent article about soaring sales of snack foods, The Wall Street Journal cited government data showing that, while only 10 percent of Americans snacked three or more times a day in the late 1980s, the figure had risen to 56 percent in 2010.

Can it really be that low? Snacks seem to be everywhere and, in fact, Hartman Group, a market research firm, found in a 2013 survey that 90 percent of consumers snack multiple times daily. In my experience, no grown child in this country is complete unless a parent has been designated to bring the snacks, as if a bunch of kids, who were made to run around, would expire from the slightest exertion without frequent doses of fat and carbohydrates.

Many snacks are nutritionally dubious, yet increasingly they are crowding out traditional breakfasts, lunches and dinners. About half of Americans replace meals with snacks at least three to four times a week, Hartman discovered. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, meanwhile, says American kids take in nearly 200 more calories a day from snacks than they

did in the 1970s. No wonder so many are overweight.

But of course this isn't just about food, for snacks, having turned eating into an empty sacrament, are now the most reliable insignia of our culture. Just the other day, I read that the owner of the New Republic wanted to publish more "snackable" items. His staff quit en masse over his larger plans for the venerable publication, but can anyone doubt he had his finger on the American pulse? The market value of Twitter, with its 140-character limit, is around \$23 billion, versus perhaps \$2 billion for New York Times Co.

Once you start looking, it's hard not to see snacking everywhere. Many of us who listen to music now prefer songs to albums, a preference abetted by the digital revolution in music distribution. In some quarters, at least, hookups are preferable to enduring relationships or even temporary monogamy. Disposable fashion from stores such as H&M, backed by Chinese manufacturing, has enabled us to snack on clothing.

Or thumb through almost any magazine; you'll be struck by its hyperkinetic tenor — all those bite-sized items studied with sprightly images, like canapes topped with mops. Magazines are full of this stuff, which makes them feel as if they offer a meal of hors d'oeuvres compared with the feast of text many once cooked up on their glossy pages.

The Internet, of course, has promoted snacking. As I write this, email alerts come and go, inviting me to take a break and snack on a little human interaction. I like reading books on an iPad, but the temptation to snack on some tweets after every few paragraphs can be hard to resist. Snacking can be habit-forming; any online document that I encounter longer

than a screen full of text sets me to skimming impatiently.

We gravitate toward snacks because they're fast, easy and require little commitment. They also taste good. Online, snackable items are easily digested by grazing readers, and just as easily shared — the very essence shared media. In keeping with our demand for flexibility and immediate gratification, snacks are always available, require little investment and can be consumed without the time and consideration that used to go into more primitive forms of nourishment, such as sit-down dinners or books.

It's been said that you are what you eat, and in some sense we Americans are becoming snacks, at least to the businesses that consume our labor. Companies that once had lasting relationships with workers nowadays often prefer outside contractors, or employees who can be rescheduled — or terminated — at the whim of management. Firms, in other words, prefer to snack on labor, a practice that makes it all the more difficult for workers to schedule (or pay for) meals.

Snacking suits the way we live — Hartman says 40 percent of adult meals excluding snacks are eaten alone — but it isn't always satisfying. Even if they fill us up, snacks mostly just blot us with their emptiness, which in turn leaves us wanting something more. Maybe it would be better if we waited for dinner, the way we used to, and then sat down to eat it with somebody we cared about.

I'm going to work on this, I swear, just as soon as I grab a microwave chimichanga to tide me over. While I'm at it, I wonder what's happening on Twitter?

Daniel Akst is an author and former Los Angeles Times columnist. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Shunning nature should go against our instincts

By GARY FERGUSON

Americans find ourselves in a peril — arguably, the first in our nation's history — when our unawareness about being in nature is common. Our culture is so out of touch with nature that we are willing to outgrow our desire for it. We have a growing intolerance for inconvenience, a feeling well captured by the suburban fifth-grader who memorably told nature advocate Richard Louv, "I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where the electricity is."

Of course adults have our own version of that. Being on the trail, in the woods, or on the river for days on end brings not just thoughts of blisters and bugs and rain and heat but, perhaps more alarming, the loss of cellphone service and Facebook.

Yet the problem runs deeper. Other symptoms include the clatter of so-called nature shows, which have become something akin to horror movies. An evening scrolling the cable guide will reveal a lineup that includes "North America's Top 20 Most Pearsome Predators," a rerun or two of "Shark Attack," and a couple of episodes of "Nature's Deadliest," or "Killing Roundup," or "Yukon Men." If you're lucky, this could be capped off by something truly catastrophic, like "Yellowstone: Brink of Disaster." This 2013 Discovery Channel documentary, as you have guessed, is about the super-volcano that lies in wait just under the surface of Yellowstone National Park.

Online, popular websites like BuzzFeed generate social media fodder such as "Nine Times That Nature Didn't Care About Your Feelings." That one offered video of a python swallowing a deer whole, and a bunnycorn goshing tumbling down a cliff, among others. Then of course there's

a whole genre of "survivalist" movies like "127 Hours," based on the true story of a man who cut off his arm after being pinned by a rock in a Utah canyon. I sometimes feel as if the entertainment/media industry is conspiring to keep us on the sofa watching this stuff by making us afraid to go outside.

"Wild," the movie adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's memoir about her trek on the Pacific Crest Trail as a rite of passage through grief, stands out as a refreshing exception to this trend. Instead of portraying nature as the province of man-eating grizzlies, dangerous snakes or deadly avalanches, "Wild" reminds us how wilderness can scour the debris from a broken life. Being out in the natural world may expose us now and then to harsh conditions, but it also provides breathtaking beauty, a backdrop against which people reacquire themselves with things that really matter.

And yet fewer people seem to seek such potentially profound experiences. Visits to the 58 crown jewels of the National Park System — nature-based parks such as Acadia, the Grand Canyon and Yosemite — peaked in 1997, and, per capita, had declined 19 percent by 2010. Some who work in state and national parks have expressed deep concern to me about how school kids show up on field trips not so much eager to play, or excited to learn, but unsettled by whatever ferocious creatures might be lurking in the bushes. As stated in a news release last summer by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Getting (today's) visitors to reweigh perceived threats is an art."

Back in 1960, celebrated psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall — the man who coined the term "adolescence" — wrote that kids age 3 to 8, especially those

in the "urban hothouse," must be exposed to nature. They should be taken "to visit field, forest, hill, shore, the water, flowers, animals, the true homes of childhood ... for the very soul and body cry out for a more active, objective life, and to know nature and man at first hand. These two staples, stories and nature, by these informal methods of the home and the environment constitute our fundamental education."

In the century since, however, kids are even less tutored by nature. A 2003 survey of 830 mothers by Dr. Rhonda Clements revealed that 70 percent of the women said they played outdoors every day when they were kids, yet only 31 percent of their children played outside daily. Granted, playing outdoors or even visiting the Grand Canyon isn't the same as shouldering a pack and traversing mountains for weeks on end, as Cheryl Strayed did. Still, a great many men and women, if so inclined, have the physical capacity to manage such a trek. The origin of Strayed's accomplishment isn't her strength and endurance, but rather her love of nature. According to an outer journey might foster an inner one.

Maybe it's worth reminding ourselves that, according to the Florida Museum of Natural History, the likelihood of being attacked by a shark is about 1 in 3.7 million. The risk of being killed next year by a venomous snake or spider? According to the National Safety Council, about 1 in 95 million and 1 in 28 million, respectively.

As for the possibility that our fear of nature will reach the point that we lose the experience of being alive? The risk of that is harder to calculate.

Gary Ferguson is the author of "The Carry Home: Lessons from the American Wilderness." This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

OPINION

Protests planted seeds for ambush of cops

By CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS
Philadelphia Daily News

If you say something loudly enough, with just the right amount of conviction, the odds are that people will begin to listen. They might not agree with you, but they'll listen, and then move on.

Sometimes, though, there will be people who listen too closely and then, out of a skewed sense of reality or priority or simply as a convenient excuse for their own twisted motives, turn your passion and conviction into criminal act.

You will say that legitimate protest and advocacy, when peaceful, should never be blamed for the antisocial aberrations of others, but that is naive.

Because although some protests are peaceful, as with those old women who pray rosaries in front of abortion clinics, they always contain the seeds of possible violence if the wrong people take the wrong message. Pro-choice advocates like to conflate quiet religious activists with the people who shot Dr. George Tiller in Kansas in 1993 and 2009, and they even blamed Bill O'Reilly for the abortion doctor's death because he once referred to the man as "Tiller the killer."

I thought then that this was a foolish and fabricated accusation, and I'm not prepared to make the same mistake that the abortion-rights advocates made back then.

But I'd be blind if I didn't acknowledge just how much anti-police rhetoric in these past few weeks has contributed to a climate of anger, fear and blame. The constant and growing drumbeat of "hands up, don't shoot" or "I can't breathe," the preachings of a demagogue like Al Sharpton (who never saw a race card he didn't want to play) and the unsophisticated attempts to

link the Garner and Brown cases under the same umbrella of police corruption has made it inevitable that someone would take the message that cops are evil and therefore expendable.

So it was not surprising that after days of constant attack in the streets, in the world of punditry and most despicably from the mouths of government officials including New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, two police officers would become the sacrificial lambs to the race-baiting rhetoric of a self-interested constituency.

When Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were shot execution-style by a man who announced on social media his intention to "put wings on pigs," it was a direct and sadly inevitable result of the dangerous, powerful animus unleashed against police across the nation. The so-called peaceful marches against police brutality were always peppered with invitations to violence, and there was a discernible undercurrent of anti-police hatred in attacks on the legitimacy of the Brown and Garner grand juries.

It was laughable, if not entirely unexpected, how the industrial grievance complex would immediately try to distance itself from any responsibility in this matter. The life had barely seeped out of the bodies of the officers when social media exploded with apologists for the protesters. On my own page, virtual "friends" wrote of how the shooter was just a crazy man who had shot his girlfriend earlier in the day and was just exploiting the Brown/Garner dynamic to get attention. Others mentioned that he was apparently a Muslim and that this might have some relevance.

Both suggestions miss the mark. This was not a jihad, unless you consider it a jihad against the police. And the fact that



the man had murdered his girlfriend, while tragic, doesn't provide any cover for his hatred of the men he blamed, in turn, for murdering his African-American brothers.

The bitter irony here is that neither of the assassinated police officers was white. This has been pointed to by supporters of the protests as proof that the shooter was not motivated by race hatred. But the officers were targeted more for their uniforms than for their skin, and this is in large part attributable to the screaming, virulent voices raised against those uniforms and badges.

Protests are valuable. Selma mattered,

the candlelight vigils to "take back the night" mattered, the 17-year-old Pakistani Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai matters. But rhetoric that blames a class of people for the annihilation of black youth, and does it so indiscriminately that attacks on people are interchangeable with criticism of legal machinery is dangerous.

No protester held the gun that killed Officers Ramos and Liu. No one cried "fire" in a theater. But some of those protesters created the clear and present danger that this could happen.

And it did.

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News.

Should satire be as clueless as 'The Interview'?

By REKHA BASU

The Des Moines (Iowa) Register

The dust-up between Sony Pictures and North Korea gets more bizarre and complicated by the day, opening once unimaginable scenarios of a foreign government resorting to information-hacking to retaliate against perceived offenses by a private business. A movie studio cancels its film release to avoid more embarrassing leaks of its information, and a Japanese-owned corporation with a large American presence gets thrust into a foreign policy role. The studio's decision gets criticized by the U.S. president, who says he should have been consulted. Our government may have retaliated by cutting off North Korea's Internet access Monday night. And now Sony Pictures has asked theaters to rebook "The Interview," with 200 to 300 reportedly planning to screen it Christmas Day.

So what have we learned? It would be deplorable if North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un did, in fact, check back Sony Pictures in retaliation for a fictitious film about a U.S. assassination plot against him. It would also establish embarrassment-causing cyber sabotage as an alternative to bullets and drones to settle disputes. As a nation that draws strength from its freedoms, we can't tailor cultural offerings to what is least likely to give offense — so it's not surprising the dominant public reaction seems to be that we shouldn't capitulate to blackmail or threats. But if all we take away from this is to retaliate in kind, think as deviously, be as defiant or just learn better cybersecurity, we're missing a key point.



Ben Gray, Atlanta Journal-Constitution/AP

Brandon Delaney, general manager of the Plaza Theatre in Atlanta, finishes hanging the marquis Tuesday to announce that the theater will be showing "The Interview."

Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should.

Kim Jong Un is a thin-skinned despot determined to show he won't be mocked or humiliated. His government doesn't just block its people's access to information and deny their freedom of thought, speech, religion and association. It also detains, tortures and "disappears" dissidents, ac-

cording to the U.N. Human Rights Council. (There are an estimated 80,000 to 120,000 political prisoners.) It creates starvation by taking food away from those in need and uses it to reward other groups. It uses propaganda to "incite nationalistic hatred towards official enemies of the state," including Japan and the U.S. And North Korea has nuclear and possibly chemical and biological weapons capabilities.

Given these facts, was a comedic movie that depicts Kim Jong Un's head being blown off in a fiery explosion well-advised in the first place? Have you heard it said that people who play with fire should expect to get burned? Did Sony Pictures even think through the consequences of making such a movie? Did Kim Jong Un just fit the right profile of a bad guy when producers sat down to brainstorm a plot — or did they imagine this would unite North Korea's citizens in an uprising against him?

The truth is, for all the brilliant films that come out of it, Hollywood can also be childish and myopic. Some movie fare is so sophomoric, gratuitously violent, misogynistic or scatological that it feels as if the filmmakers are flexing their collective muscle just to say, "You can't stop us!" But we're living in times that demand more thoughtfulness about the messages we convey, whether across the globe or at home, especially with imagery this visceral. Making "The Interview" isn't much different than burning a Quran and streaming it live, as a Florida church did in 2011. That resulted in mass protests around the Muslim world that the Pentagon said killed more than 16 and injured more than 90. Yet Pastor Terry Jones was all set to do it

again the following year.

And some American filmmakers have gone out of their way to mock some Americans, as Bill Maher and Sasha Baron Cohen did, respectively, in "Religulous" and "Borat." Funny as they are, those movies deceptively got the trust of people who believed they were being engaged in sincere conversations only to poke fun at them for their religious or political views. By the same token, just because burning the U.S. flag has been declared a protected right doesn't mean we should do it just to offend certain people.

In countries where the press isn't free and government controls the message, people might not believe "The Interview" isn't a form of provocation by the richest, most powerful nation in the world. That gets more likely as the lines between our own key players and their interests — government, business, private citizens — get squishier. One would hope North Koreans would see the allure of a freer way of life. But should they ever see "The Interview," it's doubtful that's what they'd perceive. More likely they'd see a bullying America disrespecting their leader and trying to humiliate a small non-Western nation.

Parody and provocation have important roles to play in our culture. But let's be thoughtful about how we use them and what messages we convey. Let's think bigger than adolescent defiance and dollar signs. And let's start teaching everyone diplomacy and civility early in school.

So here's wishing all those of you who celebrate it a joyful, peaceful, safe and civil Christmas.

Rekha Basu is a Des Moines Register columnist.

SCOREBOARD

Sports

Go to the American Forces
Network website for the most up-
to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Deals

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE — Suspended N.Y. Mets beat L.J. Mazzilli (St. Lucie, Fla.) 5-0 games for a second positive test for traces of abuse in violation of the Minor League Drug Prevention and Treatment Program.

AMERICAN LEAGUE
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Claimed C Ryan Lavanway off waivers from the Chicago Cubs. Released Of Quintin Ber-

HOUSTON ASTROS — Assigned INF Gregorio Petit outright to Fresno (PCL). **MINNESOTA TWINS** — Agreed to terms with free-agent outfielder to one-year contract. Assigned C Eric Fryer and Of Chris Parmelee outright to Rochester (IL).

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Assigned RHP Fernando Rodriguez outright to Nashville (PCL).

SEATTLE MARINERS — Assigned RHP Lathaniel Wright off waivers from the Tampa Bay Rays (PCL). **ST. LOUIS CARDINALS** — Announced RHP Ben Rowen cleared unconditional waivers and is a free agent.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Claimed LHP Scott Barnes off waivers from Texas and RHP Carlos Salinas from Pittsburgh.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
CHICAGO CUBS — Agreed to terms with C David Ross on a two-year contract. Assigned RHP Don Roach and RHP Brian Wilson outright to Iowa.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Assigned OF Kyle Jensen outright to Oklahoma City (PCL).

MIAMI MARLINS — Claimed RHP Preston Wilson off waivers from the N.Y. Yankees.

BALTIMORE BREWERS — Claimed LB Shane Peterson off waivers from the Chicago White Sox.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Agreed to terms with RHP Jordan Walden on a two-year contract.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Agreed to terms with outfielder outright to Los Angeles (PCL). Agreed to terms with RHP Jake Peavy on a two-year contract.

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION
PHILADELPHIA 76ERS — Signed D Malcolm Thomas. Released F Ronny Turiaf.

FOOTBALL
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
ATLANTA FALCONS — Placed S William Moore on injured reserve. Signed S Sean Baker from the practice squad and RB Morris Claiborne from the practice squad.

CAROLINA PANTHERS — Placed WR Dante Pettis on injured reserve.

CHICAGO BEARS — Placed DE Willie Young on injured reserve. Signed DE Austin Lyles.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Released FB Ray Anderson to the practice squad. Re-signed DT Christian Tupou to the practice squad.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Released LB Darrin Drakeford from the practice squad.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Released RB Brian Allen.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Released DT Anthony Armstrong to the practice squad. Signed DL Cameron Henderson to the practice squad.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Released TE Aaron Hootkins and DT Jimmy Stanton from the practice squad. Signed LB Paul Allen, S Donte Bailey and WR Douglas McClellan to the practice squad.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed CB Richard Anderson to the practice squad.

WASHINGTON REDSKINS — Placed LB Tahir Whitehead on injured reserve. Signed O Rishawn Johnson from the N.Y. Giants practice squad. Signed C Colin Lockett to the practice squad.

HOCKEY
NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
ARIZONA COYOTES — Assigned F Alexander Bodnar to the AHL. Signed F Brandon Prust to the AHL.

CALGARY FLAMES — Assigned D Corey Paillet to the AHL.

DALLAS STARS — Assigned D Jamie Oleksiak to Texas (AHL).

FLORIDA Panthers — Activated F Michael Cammerlin from injured reserve.

U.S. ANTI-DOPING AGENCY — Announced discipline runner Kristian Stenson accepted a 12-month suspension after testing positive for a prohibited substance during the Pike County, England, triathlon.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer
NEW YORK RED BULLS — Named Ali Curtis sporting director.

NEW YORK CITY FC — Completed the transfer of D DeAndre Yedlin to Tottenham Hotspur (England Premier League).

SPORTING Kansas City — Signed G Tim Melia.

College football

Bowl schedule

Saturday, Dec. 20

New Orleans Bowl

Louisiana-Lafayette 16, Nevada 3

New Mexico Bowl

Albuquerque

Utah State 21, UT-El Paso 10

Las Vegas Bowl

Utah 45, Colorado State 10

Famous Idaho Potato Bowl

At Boise

Air Force 38, Western Michigan 24

Camelia Bowl

At Montgomery, Ala.

Bowling Green 33, South Alabama 28

Miami Beach Bowl

Memphis 55, BYU 48, Utah State 10

Tuesday, Dec. 23

Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl

Marshall 52, Northern Illinois 23

Pointsettia Bowl

At San Diego

Navy 17, San Diego State 16

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Bahamas Bowl

At Nassau

Western Kentucky 17-5 vs. Central Michigan (7-5)

Hawaii Bowl

At Honolulu

Rice (7-5), Fresno State (6-7)

Friday, Dec. 26

Heart of Dallas Bowl

Illinois (6-5) vs. Louisiana Tech (8-4)

Quick Lane Bowl

At Detroit

Rutgers (7-5) vs. North Carolina (6-6)

UCF (9-3) vs. N.C. State (7-5)

Saturday, Dec. 27

Military Bowl

At Annapolis, Md.

Virginia Tech (9-5) vs. Cincinnati (9-3)

San Bowl

At San Jose

Duke (9-3) vs. Arizona State (9-3)

Independence Bowl

At Shreveport, La.

Miami (6-6) vs. South Carolina (6-6)

Pen State Bowl

At Brocks, N.Y.

Boston College (7-5) vs. Penn State (6-6)

Holiday Bowl

At New Orleans

Nebraska (9-3) vs. Southern Cal (8-4)

Liberty Bowl

At Memphis, Tenn.

West Virginia (7-5) vs. Texas A&M (7-5)

Russell Athletic Bowl

At Orlando, Fla.

Clemson (9-3) vs. Oklahoma (8-4)

Texas Bowl

At Dallas

Texas (6-6) vs. Arkansas (6-6)

Tuesday, Dec. 30

Muskegon City Bowl

At Nashville, Tenn.

Notre Dame (9-3) vs. LSU (8-4)

Boik Bowl

At Charlotte, N.C.

Louisville (9-3) vs. Georgia (9-3)

Fosters Farm Bowl

At Clark, Calif.

Stanford (7-5) vs. Maryland (7-5)

Wednesday, Dec. 31

Peach Bowl

At Mississippi (9-3) vs. TCU (11-1)

Fiesta Bowl

At Glendale, Ariz.

Boise State (11-2) vs. Arizona (10-3)

Orange Bowl

At Miami Gardens, Fla.

Mississippi State (10-2) vs. Georgia Tech (10-3)

Thursday, Jan. 1

Outback Bowl

At Tampa, Fla.

Wisconsin (10-3) vs. Auburn (8-4)

Cotton Bowl Classic

At Arlington, Texas

Michigan State (10-2) vs. Baylor (11-1)

Citrus Bowl

At Orlando, Fla.

Minnesota (8-4) vs. Missouri (10-3)

AP spotlight

Dec. 26
1908 — Jack Johnson becomes the first black man to win the world heavyweight boxing title by knocking out Jess Willard of Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia.

1917 — Toronto's Harry Cameron becomes the first American to win the Davis Cup in a game as the Maple Leafs defeat the Montreal Canadiens.

1943 — Sid Luckman throws five touchdowns to lead the Chicago Bears to a 41-21 victory over the Washington Redskins for the NFL championship.

1954 — The United States wins the Davis Cup with a 5-0 sweep of Australia, the third defeat for a defending champion.

1954 — Otto Graham scores three touchdowns and passes for two to lead the Cleveland Browns to a 56-10 rout of the Detroit Lions for the NFL title.

1960 — The Cleveland Browns intercept six passes, one of which is returned for a touchdown, to win the game in a 38-14 victory over the Los Angeles Rams for the NFL championship. Otto Graham of the Browns leads the Browns to touchdowns and scores two more.

1964 — Six Iowa Hawkeyes players come from behind twice on a 35-yard pass to win the game in a 27-24 victory over the Green Bay Packers for 17-13 for the NFL title.

1964 — Wray Carlton and Jack Kemp each score touchdowns and Pete Gog-

Rose Bowl
At Pasadena, Calif.
Playoff semifinal: Oregon (12-1) vs. Florida State (13-0)

At New Orleans
Playoff semifinal: Alabama (12-1) vs. Ohio State (12-1)

Friday, Jan. 2
Armed Forces Bowl
At Fort Worth, Texas

Pittsburgh (6-6) vs. Houston (7-5)

Tasclaver Bowl
At Jacksonville, Fla.

Iowa (7-5) vs. Tennessee (6-6)

Alamo Bowl
At San Antonio

UCLA (9-3) vs. Kansas State (9-3)

Cactus Bowl
At Tempe, Ariz.

Oklahoma State (6-6) vs. Washington (6-5)

Saturday, Jan. 3
Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl

Florida (6-5) vs. East Carolina (8-4)

GoDaddy Bowl
At Mobile, Ala.

Toledo (8-4) vs. Arkansas State (7-5)

Saturday, Jan. 10
Medial of Honor Bowl

At Charleston, S.C.

American vs. National

Monday, Jan. 12
College Football Championship

At Arlington, Texas

Sugar Bowl winner vs. Rose Bowl winner

Saturday, Jan. 17
East-West Shrine Classic

At St. Petersburg, Fla.

East vs. West
St. Correggie Bowl

At Carson, Calif.

National vs. American

Saturday, Jan. 24
Senior Bowl

At Mobile, Ala.

North vs. South

FCS playoffs
First Round

Saturday, Nov. 29
Indiana State, Sacred Heart

Florida State, Eastern Kentucky

Louisiana 14, Morgan State 24

Sam Houston State 21, Southeastern Louisiana 17

South Dakota State 47, Montana State 40

Montana 52, San Diego 14

Liberty 26, James Madison 21

Northern Iowa 44, Stephen F. Austin 17

Second Round
Saturday, Dec. 6

New Hampshire 44, Fordham 19

Chattanooga 35, Indiana State 14

Coastal Carolina 66, Richmond 30

Illinois State 41, Northern Iowa 35

Sam Houston State 37, Jacksonville State 26

North Dakota State 27, South Dakota State 20

Eastern Washington 37, Montana 20

Villanova 35, Coastal Carolina 32

Quarterfinals
Saturday, Dec. 12

New Hampshire 35, Chattanooga 30

North Dakota State 33, Villanova 30

Saturday, Dec. 13
Sam Houston State 35, Jacksonville State 26

North Dakota State 33, Villanova 30

Illinois State 59, Eastern Washington 49

Semifinals
Friday, Dec. 19

Kansas City 35, Sam Houston State 3

Illinois State 59, Eastern Washington 49

Saturday, Dec. 20
Illinois State 59, Eastern Washington 49

Championship
Saturday, Dec. 20

Illinois State 59, Eastern Washington 49

At FC Dallas Stadium
Friday, Dec. 19

North Dakota State 33, Villanova 30

Illinois State 59, Eastern Washington 49

Pro football

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East
W L T Pct PF PA

W New England 12 3 0 .800 459 296

Miami 8 7 0 .533 346 336

Pittsburgh 8 8 0 .500 374 374

N.Y. Jets 3 12 0 .200 246 377

Y-Ianapolis 10 5 0 .667 431 359

Buffalo 8 7 0 .533 289 329

Jacksonville 3 12 0 .200 232 389

Tennessee 2 13 0 .133 244 411

C-Xincinnati 10 4 1 .700 348 317

Indianapolis 9 5 0 .643 374 374

Baltimore 9 6 0 .600 389 292

Cleveland 4 11 0 .267 284 394

West
Y-Denver 4 0 1 .753 435 400

San Diego 9 0 0 .900 341 329

Oakland 8 7 0 .533 334 274

Kansas City 12 0 0 1.000 289 405

NATIONAL CONFERENCE
East
W L T Pct PF PA

Y-Dallas 11 0 0 .733 423 325

Y-Pittsburgh 9 6 0 .600 404 374

N.Y. Giants 6 9 0 .400 354 366

Washington 12 0 0 1.000 289 394

South
Carolina 4 0 0 .400 305 371

Atlanta 6 9 0 .400 378 383

New Orleans 6 9 0 .400 378 404

Tampa Bay 12 0 0 1.000 378 378

North
Y-Detroit 10 0 0 .733 301 252

Y-Green Bay 11 0 0 .733 456 328

Y-Pittsburgh 10 0 0 .733 456 328

Chicago 5 10 0 .333 310 429

West
Y-Seattle 11 0 0 .733 374 248

St. Louis 11 0 0 .733 292 279

Arizona 7 6 0 .538 313 313

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Cato, Shuler carry Herd to Boca title

By STEVEN WINE
The Associated Press

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Quarterback Ra-keen Cato and receiver Tommy Shuler have played together since high school, so they were able to communicate without a lot of conversation Tuesday in their final game for Marshall.

“We don’t need to talk,” Shuler said. “Just a head nod.”

“What does a head nod mean?”
“I’m open.”

He was, time and time again. Shuler and Cato capped their careers with record-setting performances in the inaugural Boca Raton Bowl to help Marshall beat Northern Illinois 52-23.

Cato tied an NCAA mark for touchdown passes, threw for three scores and was voted the most valuable player. Shuler had 18 receptions for 185 yards and broke the Conference USA record for career catches with 322.

Cato and Shuler were high school teammates in nearby Miami, and they gave a large throng of family and friends plenty to cheer.

“To do that playing your final game in your backyard is special,” Marshall coach Doc Holliday said. “They’re just tremendous players, and they’re great friends.”

Marshall finished 13-1, with its lone loss to Western Kentucky, 67-66 in overtime. Northern Illinois finished 11-3.

“Give credit to Marshall; they made a ton of plays,” Huskies coach Rod Carey said. “I didn’t think we played real well, and that’s too bad because we’ve had an unbelievable season.”

Cato extended his streak of throwing at least one touchdown pass to 46 consecutive games. That tied the NCAA all-division record set by Central Washington’s Mike Reilly.

As usual, Cato’s favorite target was Shuler. “Anybody who knows Shuler, against a man-to-man matchup, he’s going to hurt you,” Cato said. “I’m going to continue to go at him until they show me something different, and they didn’t show me anything different.”

Cato finished the season with a school-record 40 touchdown passes. He threw for scores of 6 yards to Shuler, 11 yards to Angelo Jean-Louis and 27 yards to Deon-Tay McManus.

All of those touchdowns came in the second half. Cato completed 25 of 37 passes for 281 yards and ran 5 yards for a score.

“Cato made the plays when he needed to,” Huskies safety Dechane Durante said. The game drew a crowd of less than 15,000 in Florida Atlantic’s 30,000-seat stadium, but both coaches praised the inaugural event.

“This will be a huge bowl,” Holliday said. “The community has embraced this bowl, and when all is said and done, it’s going to be one of the best bowls in America.”

Marshall tried a bit of trickery early in the game, when Shuler took the ball and lobbed it into the end zone to Cato for an 11-yard touchdown. But the play was negated by a penalty.

“If Tommy wouldn’t have made such a bad pass, we would’ve had it,” Holliday said.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Navy quarterback Keenan Reynolds dives into the end zone for a touchdown against San Diego State during the Poinsettia Bowl.

Navy wins Poinsettia Bowl on FG

By BERNIE WILSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Pardon coach Ken Niumatalolo for being perhaps a bit befuddled amid the euphoria of Navy’s 17-16 Poinsettia Bowl victory against San Diego State on Tuesday night.

“I have no idea how we won the game,” Niumatalolo said.

The Midshipmen won it by not being the last team to make a critical mistake in a game full of them.

Navy’s Austin Grebe kicked a go-ahead, 24-yard field goal with 1 minute, 27 seconds left.

The Midshipmen won it after Donny Hageman was wide right on a 34-yard field-goal attempt with 20 seconds left.

Hageman had made his first three field-goal attempts for the Aztecs.

The winning drive was set up when Navy’s Chris Johnson forced and recovered a fumble by Donnell Pumphrey, who earlier set San Diego State’s single-season rushing record.

Fullback Chris Swain converted on a fourth-and-1 and Ryan Williams-Jenkins took a pitch and ran 28 yards to help set up the game-winner by Grebe.

“Honestly, I wasn’t thinking I was going to have to kick it because whenever we get that close, Keenan (scores),” Grebe said, referring to quarterback Keenan Reynolds. “I was just glad to make it and send our seniors out on a positive note.”

San Diego State then got to the Navy 17

‘I have no idea how we won the game.’

Ken Niumatalolo
Navy football coach

before Hageman missed. Hageman earlier made field goals of 43, 37 and 30 yards. His third field goal gave SDSU a 16-14 lead late in the third quarter.

Pumphrey gained 112 yards on 21 carries to set SDSU’s single-season rushing record with 1,867 yards. The old record was 1,842 yards by George Jones in 1995.

“It’s great but we didn’t get the win,” he said.

Navy (8-5) lost four fumbles. SDSU (7-6) had three turnovers.

“We played really, really well on defense,” Niumatalolo said. “Our defense gave us a chance. We put our defense in some bad spots with turnovers on offense, but they didn’t flinch. They played phenomenal.”

“We pride ourselves in trying not to turn the ball over and not make penalties,” he said. “To our kids’ credit they just kept battling. Things looked ugly there. We put our defense in some bad spots but they didn’t flinch. They made some big plays to keep them out of the end zone.”

Reynolds ran for two touchdowns, extending his own NCAA record for scores by a quarterback to 64.

He scored on a 1-yard keeper for the game’s first score and then somersaulted into the end zone at the end of a 6-yard run to give Navy a 14-13 lead midway through the third quarter.

“It wasn’t pretty but we were able to pull it out,” Reynolds said. “That’s football. A win is a win.”

“Our defense came up huge for us,” he said. “Hats off to those guys. If they didn’t play as well as they did we wouldn’t have had a chance.”

The Midshipmen won their fourth straight and for the sixth time in seven games. They’ve won consecutive bowl games for the second time in history. They were playing just 10 days after beating Army for the 13th straight time.

Leading 16-14, SDSU went for it on fourth-and-5 from the Navy 12 but Quinn Kaehler’s pass to Mikah Holder was incomplete.

“If we score points down there then it doesn’t come down to a field goal,” SDSU coach Rocky Long said. “You’ve got to give Navy a lot of credit. We had so many opportunities in the red zone.”

Navy punted on its next possession but got the ball back after Pumphrey fumbled.

The Midshipmen rushed for 254 yards, led by Swain with 72 yards on eight carries.

Navy improved to 2-2 in the Poinsettia Bowl. It avenged a 35-14 loss to SDSU here in 2010.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

In a third stringer's hands

Jones leads Buckeyes against Crimson Tide

By the numbers

By RUSTY MILLER
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Cardale Jones realizes many people weren't even aware he was still playing football.

It had been five years between big games — a state championship game as a junior in high school to the Big Ten title game Dec. 6 — and the only time people heard of him was because of an infamous tweet where he said going to class was pointless as a football player.

"If people forgot, I don't have a problem with that," Ohio State's latest replacement quarterback said. "My teammates and my coaches knew that I was capable when ready. So it was good I got to show everyone."

With a breakthrough game in the 59-0 rout of Wisconsin two weeks ago, Jones has suddenly reappeared.

Jones was an overlooked third-string quarterback just four months ago. Now the

third-year sophomore is the central figure in a Buckeyes offense heading into the national semifinal game against Alabama at the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1.

No one has ever doubted Jones' big arm and big talent. But there have been a lot of questions about his intangibles.

He provided a lot of answers with three TD throws in his first collegiate start against Wisconsin in the Big Ten championship game.

Jones was asked how he can prove it wasn't all just a fluke.

"(I'll) just prepare better than I did before," he said. "That's basically it. And just staying confident, have my guys around me and keep producing. We should be good."

Miller started for three years, but injured his shoulder in the 2014 Orange Bowl loss to Clemson and had surgery.

Jones won the starting job coming out of spring practice, beating out J.T. Barrett, a redshirt

freshman.

But when Miller reinjured the shoulder in August, Barrett, coming off a couple of weeks of superior practices, was selected as the starter.

Barrett was spectacular, setting Ohio State records for touchdown passes (35) and total offense (3,772) before breaking his ankle against Michigan.

Jones finished that game, then got his first start in the rarified air of the Big Ten title game where he completed 12 of 17 passes for 257 yards and the three scores without an interception and with very few missteps. Now everyone's wondering if he can do it again.

"This guy is very, very capable," Alabama coach Nick Saban said. "He's a very good passer. A big strong, athletic guy who can do all the things the other guy (Barrett) could do in terms of the quarterback runs. It's just a little different style."

AP Sports Writer John Zener contributed from Birmingham, Alabama.

10

Number of passes Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones completed this season before starting the Big Ten title game.

12

Number of passes Jones completed in Big Ten championship game, three of which were touchdowns.

257

Number of passing yards Jones accumulated in the Big Ten title game, a 59-0 rout of Wisconsin.

SOURCE: ESPN.com



Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones found himself thrust into the starter's role for the Big Ten championship game when J.T. Barrett went down with a broken ankle against Michigan.

DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L
Montreal	35	23	10	46	107	84			
Tampa Bay	36	21	11	44	117	96			
Detroit	35	18	15	40	100	87			
Toronto	35	20	12	43	118	102			
Florida	35	18	15	40	91	91			
Ottawa	32	15	9	38	73	82			
Buffalo	34	14	16	38	90	82			
Pittsburgh	35	23	9	49	115				

Metropolitan Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L
Pittsburgh	34	23	11	48	108	80			
N.Y. Islanders	34	23	11	46	105	94			
Washington	32	18	10	46	97	83			
Washington	34	17	11	46	100	90			
Philadelphia	34	18	13	43	97	83			
Philadelphia	33	14	16	31	80	107			
New Jersey	35	12	17	31	71	104			
New Jersey	36	12	17	31	71	104			
New Jersey	34	10	20	24	70	93			

Western Conference

Central Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L
Chicago	35	23	10	46	107	72			
Nashville	35	23	10	46	107	72			
St. Louis	34	21	10	43	105	80			
St. Louis	35	21	10	43	105	80			
Minnesota	34	22	10	44	108	81			
Minnesota	32	16	13	35	93	89			
Colorado	34	22	10	44	108	81			
Dallas	33	14	14	35	93	113			

Pacific Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L
Anaheim	36	23	8	51	104	98			
San Jose	35	19	12	42	99	98			
Vancouver	35	20	11	42	99	98			
Los Angeles	35	17	11	41	97	81			
Calgary	36	15	13	39	104	98			
Arizona	34	12	18	4	28	112			
San Jose	35	12	18	4	28	112			

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's games
Boston 5, New Jersey 1, 50
Carolina 5, Nashville 3
Montreal 3, N.Y. Islanders 1
N.Y. Rangers 4, Washington 2
Philadelphia 5, Minnesota 2
Pittsburgh 3, Dallas 0
Detroit 6, Buffalo 3
Arizona 5, Edmonton 1
St. Louis 3, New Jersey 1
Washington 4, Philadelphia 1
Winnipeg 5, Chicago 1

Wednesday's games
No game scheduled

Thursday's games
No game scheduled

Friday's games
No game scheduled

Saturday's games
N.Y. Islanders at Buffalo
Detroit at Ottawa
Carolina at Tampa Bay
Boston at Columbus
Washington at Minnesota
Washington at Pittsburgh
Dallas at Arizona
Philadelphia at Nashville
Nashville at Arizona
Chicago at Colorado
Edmonton at Calgary
San Jose at Los Angeles

Sunday's games
Toronto at Florida
Vancouver at Anaheim

Tuesday

Avalanche 5, Blues 0

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	30	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	30	0	0	0	0	0

First Period—1, Colorado, Johnson (Duchene, MacKinnon), 15:02. 2, Colorado, Johnson (Duchene, MacKinnon), 17:27.

Shots on Goal—St. Louis 7-12-26.

Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 0-0 (0-0).

Goals—St. Louis, Allen 11-4:24 (31 shots), Johnson (50th first, 19-16).

A—17,634 (18,007). T—2:26.

Coyotes 5, Oilers 1

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Arizona	2	1	2	5	5	5
Edmonton	2	1	0	2	2	2

First Period—1, Arizona, Gagner (Eratt, Hanzal), 1:44. 2, Arizona, Gagner (Murphy, Gagner), 5:06. 3, Edmonton, Schultz (Hunt, Arcobello), 6:18.

Second Period—4, Arizona, Yandle (Doan, Vermette), 7:54.

Third Period—1, Arizona, Gormley (Hanzal, Gagner), 4:07. 6, Arizona, Gagner (Gormley, Hanzal), 4:20.

Shots on Goal—Arizona 8-7-7-22.

Power-play opportunities—Arizona 0-0; Edmonton 0-0.

Goals—Arizona, Dubnyk 7-3:27 (27 shots-26 saves), Edmonton, Scrivens 5-13:5 (30 shots-19 first, 19-16).

A—18,332 (18,532). T—2:38.

Maple Leafs 4, Stars 0

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	1	2	1	4	4	4
Dallas	0	0	0	0	0	0

First Period—1, Toronto, Kadri (van Riemsdyk, Kessel), 5:55.

Second Period—2, Toronto, van Riemsdyk (Kadri, Bernier), 6:21. 3, Toronto, Bozak (Phaneuf, Kessel), 10:30 (pp).

Third Period—1, Toronto, Stantore (van Riemsdyk), 16:09 (pp).

Shots on Goal—Toronto 8-11-17-26.

Power-play opportunities—Toronto 0-0 (0-0).

Goals—Toronto, Bernier 14-8:43 (43 shots-3 saves), Dallas, Lettenmaier 4-5 (25-22).

A—18,532 (18,532). T—2:38.

Lightning 4, Penguins 3

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	35	23	10	46	107	84
Tampa Bay	36	21	11	44	117	96

First Period—1, Tampa Bay, Johnson (Kucherov, Palat), 6:54. 2, Tampa Bay, Johnson (Palat, Hedman), 19:56.

Second Period—3, Tampa Bay, Kucherov (Carle, Filppula), 5:24. 4, Tampa Bay, Johnson (Kucherov, Palat), 2:37. 5, Pittsburgh, Hornqvist (3 (Klinkhammer), 10:15.

Third Period—6, Pittsburgh, Kunitz (Malkin), 9:55. 7, Pittsburgh, Letang (Hornqvist, Malkin), 10:29.

Shots on Goal—Pittsburgh 7-12-10-29.

Power-play opportunities—Pittsburgh 0-0; Tampa Bay 0-4.

Goals—Pittsburgh, Fleury (10 shots-7 saves), Zatkoff 0-1-0 (0:52 second, 17-16). Tampa Bay, Vasilevsky 2-1-0 (29-26).

A—15,004 (19,200). T—2:28.

Hurricanes 2, Devils 1 (SO)

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	0	0	1	0	0	0
New Jersey	1	0	0	1	1	1

Carolina won shootout 1-0.

First Period—1, New Jersey, Gionta (Bernier, Ruutu), 13:32.

Second Period—2, Carolina, Hainsey (Dwyer, Sekera), 11:59.

Shootout—Carolina 1 (Skinner NG, Gomez NG, Terry G), New Jersey 0 (Gomez NG, Cammalleri NG, Henrique NG).

Shots on Goal—Carolina 6-15-9-33.

New Jersey 5-3-7-14.

Power-play opportunities—Carolina 0-2; New Jersey 0-3.

Goals—Carolina, Khudbin 1-8:19 (shots-18 saves). New Jersey, Schneider 1-11:64 (33-32).

A—16,101 (17,625). T—2:32.

Rangers 4, Capitals 2

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	0	0	2	0	0	0
N.Y. Rangers	1	1	2	4	4	4

First Period—1, N.Y. Rangers, Nash (Zuccarello, Brassard), 3:32.

Second Period—2, N.Y. Rangers, Nash (Zuccarello, Brassard), 1:03 (pp).

Third Period—3, N.Y. Rangers, Nash (Zuccarello), 5:12. 4, Washington, Kuznetsov (Bourque, Carlson), 9:55. 5, Washington, Ovechkin (6 (Carlson, Jonsson), 10:58 (pp)). 6, N.Y. Rangers, St. Louis (Nash, Stene), 16:12 (pp).

Shots on Goal—Washington 5-6-21-32.

N.Y. Rangers 9-9-9-27.

Power-play opportunities—Washington 1-0; N.Y. Rangers 2-0.

Goals—Washington, Holtby 15-8:27 (shots-23 saves).

N.Y. Rangers, Lundberg 15-10:32 (30-26).

A—18,006 (18,006). T—2:30.

Bruins 5, Predators 3

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	2	0	1	3	3	3
Boston	2	0	1	3	3	3

First Period—1, Boston, Marchand (Bergeron), 2:01. 2, Nashville, Wilson (Neal, Eklund), 7:35. 3, Boston, Krejci (Krejci, Lucic), 9:43 (pp).

Second Period—5, Boston, Eriksson, Jarmarko (Eklund, Beck), 11:31.

Third Period—1, Nashville, Beck (Jarmarko, Weber), 6:48. 8, Boston, Eriksson (Bergeron, Kelly), 19:22 (pp).

Shots on Goal—Nashville 7-3-15-25.

Boston 10-5-10-25.

Power-play opportunities—Boston 0-2; of Boston 1-4.

Hutton 0-1 (24 shots-20 saves). Boston, Rask 14-10-25 (25-22).

A—17,565 (17,565). T—2:29.

Canadiens 3, Islanders 1

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	0	2	1	0	0	0
N.Y. Islanders	1	0	0	1	1	1

First Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Gosses (Tavares, Visnovsky), 12:04.

Second Period—2, Montreal, Markov (Gibson), 6:10. 3, Montreal, Gallagher (Gonchar, Galchenyuk), 11:27.

Third Period—4, Montreal, Desharnais (5 (Eller, Parenteau), 18:49.

Shots on Goal—Montreal 3-9-9-21.

N.Y. Islanders 4-9-15-38.

Power-play opportunities—Montreal 0-2; N.Y. Islanders 0-2.

Goals—Montreal, Price 19-9:1 (38 shots-37 saves). N.Y. Islanders, Johnson 5-5-0 (21-18).

A—16,170 (16,170). T—2:25.

Jets 5, Blackhawks 1

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	3	1	1	5	5	5
Chicago	0	1	0	1	1	1

First Period—1, Winnipeg, Perreault (Frolik, Scheifele), 9:04. 2, Winnipeg, Little (Ladd, Wheeler), 13:18. 3, Winnipeg, Peluso (Slater, Thorburn), 15:30.

Second Period—4, Winnipeg, Perreault (8 (Byfuglien, Ladd), 8:16 (pp)). 5, Chicago, Hossa (Gauch), 12:06.

Third Period—6, Winnipeg, Wheeler (10:15) (en).

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 15-7-4-26.

Chicago 7-10-12-39.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 2-1; Chicago 0-2.

Goals—Winnipeg, Hutchinson 8-2:2 (9 shots-38 saves). Chicago, Crawford 12-6-2 (13-10). Ranta (15:30 first, 12-11).

A—22,096 (19,177). T—2:26.

Flyers 5, Wild 2

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	1	2	2	5	5	5
Minnesota	1	1	0	2	2	2

First Period—1, Philadelphia, Couturier (9 (Ungerer), 7:16. 2, Philadelphia, Giroux (11 (Schenn, Voracek), 8:33. 3, Minnesota, Scandella (8 (Sporgeon, Parise), 10:03.

Second Period—4, Minnesota, Coyte (Pominville, Suter), 3:45 (pp). 5, Philadelphia, Simmonds 15 (B.Schenn, Stritt, 15:52).

Third Period—6, Philadelphia, Lecavalier (5 (MacDonald, Belemare), 5:29. 7, Philadelphia, Raffi (Voracek), 15:31 (en).

Shots on Goal—Philadelphia 8-11-11-30.

Minnesota 7-10-7-24.

Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia 0-1; Minnesota 1-1.

Goals—Philadelphia, Emery 7-4:1 (24 shots-22 saves). Minnesota, Kueper 11-10-25 (25).

A—15,020 (17,954). T—2:34.

Red Wings 6, Sabres 3

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Buffalo	1	1	0	2	2	2
Detroit	1	1	0	2	2	2

First Period—1, Buffalo, Deslauriers (Stefford, Finley), 2:36. 2, Detroit, Weiss (Kindl, Nyquist), 10:50 (pp). 3, Buffalo, Stewart (4 (C.Hodgson, Grigorenco), 15:56.

Second Period—4, Buffalo, Benoit (1 (Gyomai, 9:00 (pp)). 5, Detroit, DeKeyser (Jurco, Glendinning), 17:54.

Third Period—6, Detroit, Zetterberg (7 (Gyomai, 9:00 (pp)). 4, Detroit, Tatar (13 (DeKeyser, Nyquist), 11:40 (pp)). 8, Detroit, Franz (Zetterberg, Kindl), 14:06 (pp). 9, Detroit, Tatar (14 (Smith, Nyquist), 17:48 (pp)).

Shots on Goal—Buffalo 6-4-6-16.

Detroit 15-11-13-39.

Power-play opportunities—Buffalo 0-1; Detroit 4-0.

Goals—Buffalo, Neuvirth 3-8:41 (29 shots-33 saves). Detroit, Mrazek 4-21 (16-13).

A—20,027 (20,027). T—2:29.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

The Rangers' Dan Boyle, right, and Martin St. Louis defend the Capitals' Alex Ovech

NBA



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Lakers guard Wayne Ellington, left, puts up a shot as Warriors forward Harrison Barnes defends Tuesday in Los Angeles.

Roundup

Sais Kobe, Lakers surprise warriors

The Associated Press
LOS ANGELES — Kobe Bryant was "anywhere in sight when he saw the Los Angeles Lakers pulled off the most stunning upsets of the NBA season so far."

Carlos Boozer scored 18 points in his new role off the bench, and the Lakers built a 24-point cushion against the league-leading Golden State Warriors and hung on for a 115-107 victory Tuesday.

Bryant, the NBA's No. 3 career scorer, sat out for the first time this season to rest his tired legs. The decision was made by coach Byron Scott, who had been hinting at it for days.

"Looking at our schedule coming up, I just thought it was a good time to give him a day of rest and let him prepare for the next game," Scott said. "Kobe told me last night, anyway, 'Coach, whatever you want me to do. Just let me know.' So he's on board with it."

The 36-year-old Bryant is averaging 35.5 minutes through 27 games.

"I think this is something that has to happen periodically," Scott said. "You've got to remember — this is 19 years in this league. That's an unbelievable career. I don't care how much his mind is willing. You're not going to be able to play 82 games at the level that he is accustomed to playing. So sometimes, you have to give him days off as well as games off."

Wayne Ellington made his first start for the Lakers in Bryant's place and scored 12 points in 25 minutes after missing the first 28 games with a left knee injury, leading host Indiana.

Hornets 108, Bucks 101
Kemba Walker scored 27 points and Gerald Henderson added 16 as Charlotte held off host Milwaukee for its season-high fourth straight victory.

Stephen Curry had 22 points

and six assists for the Warriors, who lost for only the fourth time in 27 games.

Cavaliers 125, Timberwolves 104: Kevin Love scored 20 minutes in his first game against Minnesota's star, Kyrie Irving added 29 and host Cleveland pulled away in the second half.

Trail Blazers 115, Thunder 111 (OT): Damian Lillard scored 40 points, making a tying three-pointer with three seconds left in regulation, and visiting Portland rallied from a 13-point, fourth-quarter deficit.

Bulls 19, Wizards 91: Derrick Rose scored 25 points and Pau Gasol had 18 as visiting Chicago won its fourth straight.

Hawks 107, Clippers 104: DeMarius Carroll scored a career-high 25 points and host Atlanta rallied from a 13-point deficit for its fifth straight victory.

76ers 91, Heat 87: Michael Carter-Williams scored 20 points, Luc Mbah a Moute added 19 and visiting Philadelphia erased a 23-point, second-half deficit.

Suns 124, Mavericks 115: Eric Bledsoe got his second career triple-double and host Phoenix won its fourth in a row in its highest-scoring game of the season.

Nets 102, Nuggets 96: Joe Johnson scored 27 points, Mason Plumlee added 19 points and host Denver won its 13th rebound, and host Brooklyn rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Denver.

Magic 100, Celtics 95: Tobias Harris scored 19 points and host Orlando hung on to beat Boston.

Pacers 96, Pelicans 84: George Hill scored 15 points in 21 minutes after missing the first 28 games with a left knee injury, leading host Indiana.

Hornets 108, Bucks 101
Kemba Walker scored 27 points and Gerald Henderson added 16 as Charlotte held off host Milwaukee for its season-high fourth straight victory.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	22	7	.759	
Brooklyn	12	15	.444	9
Boston	10	16	.385	10
New York	5	26	.167	17 1/2
Philadelphia	15	14	.519	

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	21	7	.750	
Washington	19	8	.704	1 1/2
Miami	13	14	.481	11 1/2
Orlando	11	20	.355	16 1/2
Charlotte	10	19	.345	17 1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	19	9	.679	
Cleveland	17	10	.630	1 1/2
Milwaukee	14	15	.483	5 1/2
Indiana	10	19	.345	9 1/2
Detroit	12	23	.345	14

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	21	7	.750	
Dallas	19	8	.704	1 1/2
San Antonio	20	6	.769	
New Orleans	14	14	.500	7

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	23	7	.767	
Oklahoma City	13	14	.483	9 1/2
Denver	12	15	.444	10 1/2
Utah	9	20	.310	13 1/2
Minnesota	12	18	.400	16 1/2

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	23	4	.852	
L.A. Clippers	19	8	.704	4 1/2
Phoenix	16	14	.533	8 1/2
Sacramento	12	18	.400	12 1/2
L.A. Lakers	9	19	.321	14 1/2

Tuesday's games				
Chicago 99, Washington 91				
Orlando 100, Boston 95				
Indiana 96, New Orleans 84				
Cleveland 125, Minnesota 104				
Atlanta 107, L.A. Clippers 104				
Philadelphia 91, Miami 87				
Brooklyn 102, Denver 96				
Portland 115, Oklahoma City 111, OT				
Charlotte 108, Milwaukee 101				
Phoenix 124, Dallas 115				
L.A. Lakers 115, Golden State 105				

Wednesday's games

New games scheduled				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington at New Orleans				
Oklahoma City at San Antonio				
Cleveland at Miami				
L.A. Lakers at Chicago				

Friday's games

Brooklyn at Boston				
Cleveland at Orlando				
Miami at Atlanta				
Indiana at Detroit				
Houston at Memphis				
San Antonio at New Orleans				
Charlotte at Oklahoma City				
L.A. Lakers at Dallas				
Philadelphia at Portland				
Phoenix at Sacramento				

Tuesday

Lakers 115, Warriors 105

GOLDEN STATE				
Stephen Curry	26	10	0-0	5
Klay Thompson	14	2	0-0	5
Draymond Green	11	2	0-0	5
Andre Iguodala	11	2	0-0	5
Shaun Livingston	12	3	0-0	5
Andre Roberson	11	2	0-0	5
David Lee	11	2	0-0	5
Marqueson Cook	11	2	0-0	5
Golden State	24	24	25	46-89

L.A. Lakers				
Blake Griffin	24	24	25	11-15
Chris Paul	14	2	0-0	5
DeAndre Jordan	11	2	0-0	5
Anthony Davis	11	2	0-0	5
John Henson	11	2	0-0	5
Golden State	24	24	25	46-89

Portland				
Blake Griffin	24	24	25	11-15
Chris Paul	14	2	0-0	5
DeAndre Jordan	11	2	0-0	5
Anthony Davis	11	2	0-0	5
John Henson	11	2	0-0	5
Portland	24	24	25	46-89

Portland				
Blake Griffin	24	24	25	11-15
Chris Paul	14	2	0-0	5
DeAndre Jordan	11	2	0-0	5
Anthony Davis	11	2	0-0	5
John Henson	11	2	0-0	5
Portland	24	24	25	46-89

Portland				
Blake Griffin	24	24	25	11-15
Chris Paul	14	2	0-0	5
DeAndre Jordan	11	2	0-0	5
Anthony Davis	11	2	0-0	5
John Henson	11	2	0-0	5
Portland	24	24	25	46-89

Suns 124, Mavericks 111

Dallas				
Dirk Nowitzki	26	10	0-0	5
Devin Harris	14	2	0-0	5
Jason Terry	11	2	0-0	5
Andrew Bogut	11	2	0-0	5
Donovan Mitchell	11	2	0-0	5
Dallas	26	19	25	41-115

Phoenix				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Phoenix	26	19	25	41-115

Phoenix				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Phoenix	26	19	25	41-115

Phoenix				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Phoenix	26	19	25	41-115

Phoenix				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Phoenix	26	19	25	41-115

Phoenix				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Phoenix	26	19	25	41-115

Pacers 96, Pelicans 84

NEW ORLEANS				
Brandon Ingram	26	10	0-0	5
Anthony Davis	14	2	0-0	5
Ja Morant	11	2	0-0	5
Terrence Williams	11	2	0-0	5
New Orleans	26	19	25	41-115

Pacers				
Paul George	26	10	0-0	5
Victor Oladipo	14	2	0-0	5
George Hill	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffrey Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Pacers	26	19	25	41-115

Magic 100, Celtics 95

BOSTON				
Isiah Thomas	26	10	0-0	5
Alvin Hayes	14	2	0-0	5
Jeffrey Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Donovan Mitchell	11	2	0-0	5
Boston	26	19	25	41-115

Magic				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Magic	26	19	25	41-115

Magic				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Magic	26	19	25	41-115

Magic				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Magic	26	19	25	41-115

Magic				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Magic	26	19	25	41-115

Magic				
Steve Nash	26	10	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	14	2	0-0	5
Chandler Parsons	11	2	0-0	5
Jeffery Taylor	11	2	0-0	5
Magic	26	19	25	41-115

Hawks 107, Clippers 104

L.A. CLIPPERS				
Chris Paul	26	10	0-0	5
Blake Griffin	14	2	0-0	5
DeAndre Jordan	11	2	0-0	5
Eric Bledsoe	11	2	0-0	5
L.A. Clippers	26	19	25	41-115

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL/NFL



ERIC JAMISON/AP

UNLV's Rashad Vaughn celebrates a 71-67 win over No. 3 Arizona on Tuesday in Las Vegas. Vaughn scored 21 points in the upset.

Top 25 roundup

UNLV celebrates upset of Arizona

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Instead of absorbing blows from one of college basketball's elite programs, UNLV attacked. Driving hard to the basket, crashing in for offensive rebounds and stepping in to take charges, the Rebels had Arizona on its heels instead of the other way around.

The result was one of UNLV's biggest wins in recent years and a wild celebration inside the Thomas and Mack Center.

Christian Wood had 24 points and 10 rebounds, Rashad Vaughn added 21 points and Patrick McCaw had a key steal in the closing seconds to help UNLV knock off No. 3 Arizona 71-67 Tuesday night.

"I thought we were going to win this game," Vaughn said. "We were focused as a team and at shootaround I had a feeling we were going to win this."

Facing the highest-ranked team to play at the Thomas and Mack Center since 1998, UNLV (8-3) refused to back down against an Arizona team that's expected to make a deep March run.

Stanford 74, No. 9 Texas 71 (OT): Anthony Brown scored a season-best 25 points and Chason Randle added 22 to help visiting Stanford knock off Texas for its first on the road against a top-10 team since 2008.

Brown gave Stanford (7-3) a one-point lead by making a driving shot with 1:08 left in overtime.

Texas' Jonathan Holmes sent the game to overtime with a jump shot from the free throw line with 25 seconds remaining.

No. 4 Louisville 80, Cal State Northridge 55: Wayne Blackshear hit his first seven shots en route to a career-high 31 points for the host Cardinals.

After a five-point effort Saturday at Western Kentucky, Blackshear made four three-pointers en route to scoring 16 of Louisville's first 21 points.

No. 7 Villanova 92, NJIT 67: Dylan Ennis scored 17 points, Ryan Arcidiacono matched a sea-



ERIC JAMISON/AP

UNLV forward Christian Wood drives to the basket against Arizona center Kalele Tarczewski on Tuesday. Wood had a double-double in UNLV's victory.

son high with 16 and host Villanova shot 54 percent from the field to survive an early upset scare.

Daniel Ochefu added 13 points and 10 rebounds for the Wildcats (12-0).

Four players hit double figures for NJIT (5-8), which stunned Michigan earlier this month.

No. 11 Wichita State 80, Hawaii 79: At Honolulu, Rashard Kelly grabbed a rebound and put back a short bank shot with 3.8 seconds left in overtime to send the Shockers to final of the Diamond Head Classic.

Ron Baker led Wichita State (10-1) with 17 points on another horrid shooting night, though he came up with a key block to send the game into overtime.

No. 14 Utah 80, South Dakota State 66: Freshman Brekott Chapman scored a career-high 22 points to help the host Utes cruise.

Follow the leaders

Solid leadership a shared trait for successful Patriots, Spurs

By HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Tom Brady and the New England Patriots are aiming for their fourth Super Bowl title.

Tim Duncan and the San Antonio Spurs are going for their sixth NBA championship.

Different sports. Similar dynasties.

"They're built and designed culturally very similarly," said Scott Pioli, head of the Patriots player personnel department during the championship seasons, "knowing who the leader is and making sure that people are going to fit in with what the leadership wants and how they want to do it."

Stability at the top is crucial to both teams' success.

Brady is in his 15th season, Duncan his 18th. They're humble superstars who set a team-first example.

Bill Belichick has coached the Patriots to 11 division titles in the past 12 seasons and has home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs for the fourth time in five years. Gregg Popovich has led the Spurs to the playoffs in 17 of his 18 full seasons as coach.

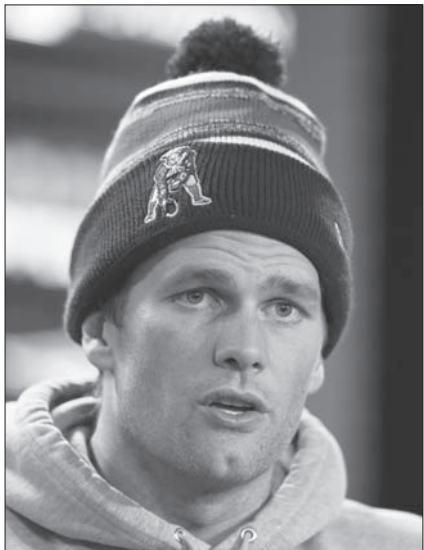
Longtime owners Robert Kraft and Peter Holt have made it clear who has authority — Belichick on the Patriots, Popovich and general manager R.C. Buford on the Spurs.

And there's mutual admiration. "Any successful franchise has good synergy between ownership, management and coaches," Popovich said. The Patriots "obviously have that. It's a fantastic organization."

Belichick returned the compliment.

"I love the way he coaches that team," the Patriots leader said. "I admire it."

Belichick and Popovich are the longest serving active coaches in their leagues. They demand precision in practices and games, stress team over individual suc-



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady answers a reporter's question during a media availability on Tuesday. Since Brady became a starter in 2001, he has the best record in the four major American pro sports leagues, with the San Antonio Spurs second.

cess, and treat their stars like their other players.

When they mess up, Brady and Duncan hear about it.

"The Spurs and the Patriots have a collection of guys that are over themselves," said Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers, who became friendly with Belichick while coaching the Boston Celtics. "Pop talks about that all the time, and so does Belichick: 'I need guys to be over themselves and about the team.'"

Duncan passes to Tony Parker for baskets. Brady throws to Rob Gronkowski for touchdowns.

"When you have a superstar player that is humble and buys in and is willing to do what's best for the team, that sets the tone for the rest of the team," Patriots special teams star Matthew Slater said. "Looking at Tim Duncan from

afar, you definitely see that. And then being in the locker room with Thomas, it's the same thing."

That constant excellence has come in an era when parity and salary caps mitigate against it.

The Patriots won Super Bowls in the 2001, 2003 and 2004 seasons. Since Brady became a starter in 2001, they have the best record in the four major American pro sports leagues with the Spurs second.

The Spurs won NBA titles in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2014. Since Duncan arrived in 1997, they're first in winning percentage with the Patriots second.

"Your success is very much dependent on the person next to you, and their ability and dependability in those two sports," Pioli said. "It's about the players being able to respond to the great leader."

Broncos send league-high 9 to Pro Bowl

By SIMMI BUTTAR
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The AFC West champion Denver Broncos led the NFL with nine players selected for the Pro Bowl on Tuesday.

Quarterback Peyton Manning was picked for the 14th time. Joining Manning from the Broncos will be Ryan Clady, Chris Harris, Von Miller, Aqib Talib, Demaryius Thomas, Julius Thomas, T.J. Ward and DeMarcus Ware. Denver also led the league with five defensive players selected.

The NFC East champion Dallas Cowboys were second with six selections for the Jan. 25 game in Glendale, Arizona, site of the Super Bowl.

Quarterback Tony Romo will be going for the fourth time. Dez Bryant, Travis Frederick, Zack Martin, DeMarco Murray and Tyron Smith were also honored.

Other notable players selected included Super Bowl-winning quarterbacks New England's Tom Brady (10th selection), Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers (fourth), and Pittsburgh's Ben Roethlisberger (third).

The Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks were one of six teams with five players. Not enough, according to one of their stars.

"It's kind of frustrating because you sometimes feel like your teammates are getting punished for being on a good team," defensive back Richard Sherman said.

NFL



Vikings rookie quarterback Teddy Bridgewater has completed more than 70 percent of his passes in four straight games. He has impressed teammates and coaches with his unflappable demeanor.

LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Vikings QB Bridgewater ending on a high note

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI
The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS—The Minnesota Vikings have endured quite a season, losing star running back Adrian Peterson to legal issues, three-fifths of their offensive line to injury and never really threatening in the NFC playoff picture after midseason.

In the end, all the drama off the field and the struggles on the field may be worthwhile for first-year coach Mike Zimmer.

That's because Teddy Bridgewater is finishing the season on a high note and appears ready to put an end to the franchise's seemingly endless search for a long-term solution at quarterback.

The rookie first-round draft pick has completed more than 70 percent of his passes in four straight games. He has topped 300 yards in two of those games and thrown seven touchdowns and four interceptions — one on a desperation pass at the halftime buzzer — in that stretch.

It's a promising trend that backs up the faith Zimmer and offensive coordinator Norv Turner have expressed in him all season. "Early in the year I just strug-

gled and I wasn't playing good football," Bridgewater said after a 37-35 loss in Miami on Sunday.

"Norv Turner said something to us a couple of weeks back and he told us that we were going to be playing the best football in December. If you think about it we've been playing pretty good for the most part."

Bridgewater was pressed into duty sooner than the Vikings had planned when Matt Cassel was lost for the season with a foot injury against the New Orleans Saints on Sept. 21.

Bridgewater threw for 317 yards in his first career start to beat the Atlanta Falcons, but struggled with inaccuracy, especially on throws down the field, through the first half of the season.

He threw three interceptions in a loss to the Lions and was just 21-for-37 (57 percent) while missing several wide open receivers in a 24-21 loss to the Packers on Nov. 23, typical issues for a rookie quarterback.

Since then, he's been much sharper.

He went 19-for-26 for 259 yards with two touchdowns and an interception against the Dolphins' fourth-ranked pass defense on

Sunday and continues to impress coaches and teammates with his unflappable demeanor.

Turner opened his weekly news conference last week with an impassioned defense of Bridgewater, lauding his ability to keep playing in a makeshift offense that includes a No. 1 receiver in Charles Johnson who was signed off the Cleveland Browns' practice squad in September.

"It's pretty incredible to me what he's done, how he's handled it, the things he's gotten done and what he's really done is made everyone around him better and that's a quality that you're looking for," Turner said.

The Vikings (6-9) host the Bears (5-10) on Sunday in the season finale, one more chance for Bridgewater and the offense to build some momentum going into the offseason.

"I think the last five games you can kind of tell our offense is playing a lot better and we're starting to play well in Norv's system," left tackle Matt Kalil said. "He's a great offensive coordinator. Once you kind of get things clicking on all cylinders, it could be a great offense."

Scoreboard

AFC individual statistics

Quarterbacks					
	Att	Yds	TD Int		
Rothlisberger, PIT	570	384	46/35 8		
P. Manning, DEN	560	374	44/54 39 15		
Brady, NWE	565	369	40/29 51 9		
P. Rivers, SD	536	359	39/95 31 16		
Luck, IND	600	370	46/31 38 16		
Fitzpatrick, HOU	312	197	2/63 17 8		
Alec Smith, KAN	464	303	32/65 18 18		
Tannehill, MIA	559	339	37/66 25 12		
Flacco, BAL	511	322	36/75 25 12		
K. Orton, BUF	424	271	28/42 17 10		
Rushers					
	Att	Yds	LG TD		
L. Bell, PIT	252	1341	47 6 8		
A. Foster, HOU	255	1223	48 51 8		
Forsett, BAL	218	1447	53 6 2		
Je. Hill, CIN	199	1024	51 85/95 8		
J. Charles, KAN	193	979	57 0/37 6		
L. Miller, MIA	197	921	45/68 33 7		
Ivory, NYJ	185	792	42/81 11 6		
C. Anderson, DEN	166	762	45/59 27 7		
Bernard, CIN	165	672	40/89 5 1		
Chris Johnson, NYJ	145	643	44/3 47 1		
Receivers					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
An. Brown, PIT	127	1570	12 5/48 12		
Dem. Thomas, DEN	103	1304	14 6/66 11		
E. Sanders, DEN	95	1331	14 40 48 9		
Edelman, NWE	92	972	10 6/69 4		
Hilton, IND	82	1145	16 3/73 11		
Gronkowski, NWE	82	1124	13 7/46 12		
J. Landry, MIA	79	703	8 9 25 5		
K. Allen, SNO	77	102	25 5 7		
L. Bell, PIT	77	774	10 4/18 3		
And. Johnson, HOU	802	107	35 2		
Punters					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
Anger, JAX	48	1168	69 47 4		
Koch, BAL	54	2562	73 47 4		
McAfee, IND	64	3011	47 47 2		
Huber, CIN	70	3271	69 46 7		
Ry. Allen, NWE	62	2896	67 46 5		
Lechler, HOU	77	3567	71 46 3		
Kern, TEN	81	3735	69 46 1		
Fields, MIA	53	2436	60 46 0		
Quigley, NYJ	76	3492	69 45 9		
Scifres, SNO	125	2516	72 45 7		
Punt Returns					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
Edelman, NWE	24	294	12 3 8/8 1		
Ad. Jones, CIN	22	262	11 9 47 0		
De. Thomas, KAN	30	338	25 12 8 0		
Jac. Jones, BAL	29	275	9 5 45 0		
McKelvin, BUF	21	183	28 7 24 0		
An. Brown, PIT	28	232	8 4 36 0		
J. Landry, MIA	25	204	82 8 22 0		
Kerley, NYJ	21	156	7 5 41 0		
Carrie, AOK	26	195	7 5 37 0		
Burse, DEN	26	161	7 3 22 0		
Kickoff Returns					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
Ad. Jones, CIN	97	730	97 97 1		
Jac. Jones, BAL	31	957	30 9/108 1		
Kn. Davis, KAN	87	774	28 46 9/91 1		
J. Landry, MIA	30	847	28 2 74 0		
Toddman, JAX	37	939	54 20 4		
Harvin, NYJ	40	498	24 4 1		
Alexandros, NWE	20	482	24 1 81 0		
L. Washington, TEN	26	598	23 0 50		
L. Murray, AOK	19	429	26 38 0		
Scoring Touchdowns					
	TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts
J. Charles, KAN	12	0	0	0	74
A. Foster, HOU	12	0	0	0	74
Gates, SNO	12	0	0	0	72
Gronkowski, NWE	12	0	0	0	72
Je. Thomas, DEN	12	0	0	0	68
Dem. Thomas, DEN	11	0	0	0	68
L. Bell, PIT	11	0	0	0	68
To. Smith, BAL	10	0	0	0	60
M. Wallace, MIA	10	0	0	0	60
Kicking					
	PAT	FG	LG Pts		
Gostkowski, NWE	47-47	28-28	53 131		
Vinatieri, IND	40-45	10-12	90 8		
Brady, BUF	37-37	30-35	55 127		
Bullock, HOU	42-42	27-30	53 123		
Sullivan, PIT	38-38	28-33	52 122		
Tucker, AOK	40-40	27-32	55 121		
Johnson, CIN	37-37	27-29	55 119		
Folk, NYJ	19-19	29-35	55 106		
Novak, SNO	39-39	22-25	52 105		

NFC individual statistics

Quarterbacks					
	Att	Yds	TD Int		
Romo, DAL	491	278	34/56 38 8		
A. Rodgers, GBY	498	324	41/55 36 5		
Brees, NOY	565	365	40/29 51 9		
M. Ryan, ATL	581	386	44/48 28 12		
R. Wilson, SEA	427	268	32/36 20 16		
C. Palmer, ARI	548	351	38/61 29 12		
E. Manning, NYG	548	351	38/61 29 13		
Gutierrez, CAR	273	175	21/26 12 10		
Sanchez, PHL	273	175	21/26 12 10		
M. Stafford, DET	210	343	40/40 19 12		
Rushers					
	Att	Yds	LG TD		
D. Murray, DAL	273	1745	45/8 51 12		
M. Lynch, SEA	266	1246	46/8 79 12		
L. McCoy, PHL	224	1230	41 12 51 5		
Lacy, GBY	220	1039	47 2 44 9		
A. Morris, WAS	253	1031	40/8 30 8		
Forste, CHI	249	987	33/6 32 8		
Gore, SNF	230	962	41/8 52 1 4		
Ma. Ingram, NOR	212	907	42/8 31 8		
R. Wilson, SEA	112	842	57 2 55 6		
J. Bell, DET	210	800	38 1 57 7		
Receivers					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
Ju. Jones, ATL	96	1286	13 4 73 1		
G. Tate, DET	94	785	8 4 56 4		
Forste, CHI	92	1433	15 6 80 13		
J. Nelson, GBY	87	1207	13 9 70 10		
Cobb, GBY	83	1099	12 3 78 10		
D. Bryant, DAL	83	1211	14 5 68 14		
Jeffery, CHI	83	1099	12 3 78 10		
M. Clayton, CAR	82	1269	15 2 78 10		
G. Olsen, CAR	82	981	10 2 38 6		
M. Bennett, CHI	82	981	10 2 38 6		
Punters					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
Way, WAS	68	3173	71 46 7		
A. Lee, SNF	73	3483	77 47 2		
St. Martin, DET	64	3011	47 47 2		
Hekker, STL	75	3474	61 46 3		
Mostard, NOR	55	2534	63 46 1		
Westhead, NYG	63	2414	64 45 5		
C. Jones, DAL	63	2414	64 45 5		
Bosher, ATL	69	3091	67 44 8		
Northman, CAR	69	3091	67 44 8		
Locke, MIN	135	3212	62 46 6		
Punt Returns					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
Sproules, PHL	35	391	12 7 81 1		
T. Austin, STL	20	245	13 8 81 1		
R. Ross, DET	26	266	10 3 35 0		
Shereels, MIN	26	266	10 3 35 0		
Dw. Harris, DAL	28	263	9 4 38 0		
B. Bryant, DAL	31	243	9 4 38 0		
B. Ellington, SNF	23	198	8 2 23 0		
Beckham, JR, NYG	21	175	41 1 41 0		
B. Walters, SEA	25	200	80 21 0		
Roberts, WAS	26	266	7 4 37 0		
Kickoff Returns					
	No	Yds	LG TD		
B. Cunningham, STL	34	871	25 6 51 0		
C. Patterson, MIN	34	871	25 6 51 0		
B. Ellington, SNF	34	871	25 6 51 0		
Dw. Harris, DAL	28	687	24 5 42 0		
Hester, ATL	42	402	24 3 48 0		
Ch. Williams, CIN	22	249	24 3 48 0		
Roberts, WAS	28	689	23 42 5 0		
Du. Hagg, GBY	12	29	10 7 0		
Ginn Jr., ARI	19	368	19 4 43 0		
Scoring Touchdowns					
	TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts
M. Lynch, SEA	14	0	0	0	84
D. Bryant, DAL	14	0	0	0	84
Lacy, GBY	13	0	0	0	78
J. Nelson, GBY	13	0	0	0	78
D. Murray, DAL	12	0	0	0	72
Beckham, JR, NYG	11	0	0	0	66
M. Evans, TAM	11	0	0	0	66
Ch. Williams, CIN	10	0	0	0	60
Forste, CHI	10	0	0	0	60
Kicking					
	PAT	FG	LG Pts		
Corbey, PHL	50-50	30-30	96 130		
Parker, GBY	49-51	27-32	55 130		
Crosby, GBY	49-51	27-32	55 130		
St. Martin, DET	40-40	28-31	54 124		
M. Bryant, ATL	40-40	28-31	54 124		
D. Bailey, DAL	51-51	22-26	56 117		
Gano, CAR	51-51	22-26	56 117		
Catanzaro, ARI	25-25	28-32	51 109		
St. Martin, DET	31-31	23-25	55 100		
Dawson, SNF	31-31	23-25	55 100		
S. Graham, NOR	43-44	19-19	50 100		

AFC team statistics

OFFENSE			
	Yards	Rush	Pass
Pittsburgh	464	114 9	300 5
Indianapolis	385	103 2	305 3
Baltimore	390	103 2	287 0
New England	372	107 4	265 1
Cincinnati	348	135 4	213 3
Miami	347	113 3	234 3
San Diego	317	159 0	208 6
Tucker, BAL	304	83 7	256 6
San Francisco	299	159 0	221 0
Kansas City	323	126 0	202 8
Buffalo	319	149 1	230 6
N.Y. Jets	315	145 1	170 4
Tennessee	311	87 0	224 1
Jacksonville	314	108 6	195 6
Oakland	287	78 2	209 5
DEFENSE			
	Yards	Rush	Pass
Denver	312	80 6	231 3
Buffalo	315	105 8	209 9
N.Y. Jets	323	87 3	235 9
San Francisco	328	98 3	230 2
Miami	333	122 2	211 1
San Diego	342	125 0	217 0
San Diego	344	125 0	219 1
New England	349	104 3	244 9
San Diego	343	118 3	234 4
Indianapolis	352	115 5	241 3
San Francisco	355	125 5	252 5
Houston	355	104 0	251 9
Cincinnati	360	122 1	238 1
Cleveland	362	124 2	230 1
Jacksonville	376	127 3	248 1
Tennessee	372	142 1	230 6

NFC team statistics

OFFENSE			
	Yards	Rush	Pass
New Orleans	413	116 5	299 7
Philadelphia	394	122 2	272 9
San Francisco	394	122 2	272 9
Atlanta	384	97 5	288 5
Seattle	372	175 0	219 3
N.Y. Giants	358	101 0	256 2
St. Louis	351	122 2	229 2
Carolina	349	128 6	226 6
San Diego	347	127 0	255 4
Chicago	333	89 5	248 4
San Francisco	323	131 1	191 1

NFL

Playoff scenarios



NEW ENGLAND (vs. Buffalo)
Clinches AFC East and home-field advantage throughout AFC playoffs



DENVER (vs. Oakland)
Has clinched AFC West and clinches first-round bye with:
■ Win or tie, or
■ Cincinnati loss



CINCINNATI AT PITTSBURGH (vs. Steelers)
Both have clinched playoff spot. Winner clinches AFC North. Cincinnati clinches first-round bye with win and Denver loss.



SAN DIEGO AT KANSAS CITY
San Diego clinches playoff spot with win. Kansas City clinches playoff spot with win and Baltimore loss and Houston loss.



BALTIMORE (vs. Cleveland)
Clinches playoff spot with win and San Diego loss.



HOUSTON (vs. San Diego)
Clinches playoff spot with win and Baltimore loss and San Diego loss.



SEATTLE (vs. St. Louis)
Clinches NFC West with win or Arizona loss. Clinches home-field advantage throughout NFC playoffs with win.



ARIZONA (at San Francisco)
Clinches NFC West and first-round bye with win and Seattle loss.



DALLAS (at Washington)
Has clinched the NFC East clinches a first-round bye with win and Seattle loss and Arizona loss.



DETROIT AT GREEN BAY
Winner clinches NFC North and first-round bye. Detroit clinches home-field advantage throughout NFC playoffs with win and Seattle and Arizona losses.



CAROLINA AT ATLANTA
Winner clinches NFC South.



Other unlisted scenarios involve ties

Packers eager for big-stakes game

The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Mike McCarthy loves the idea of his Green Bay Packers having something significant to play for in Sunday's regular-season finale.

The Packers head coach has had teams whose playoff positioning was locked in entering the final game of the season (2009, 2011), and he's had teams that faced win-and-you're-in scenarios (2010, 2013).

But Sunday's NFC North championship game against the Detroit Lions at Lambeau Field gives McCarthy precisely what he wants. The winner not only earns the NFC North crown, it also gets the NFC's No. 2 seed and the first-round playoff bye and divisional-round home game that go with it. Even the top NFC seed could come to the winner.

Both teams are 11-4, with the Lions having won their first meeting 19-7 at Ford Field on Sept. 21.

The loser Sunday will be a wild card and would have to go on the road in the playoffs, something the Packers, a perfect 7-0 at home, would like to avoid.

"This is really how you want to go in to a (potential playoff) bye week," McCarthy said Monday, one day after his team's 20-3 victory at Tampa Bay, which clinched the Packers' sixth consecutive playoff berth.

In the 2009 regular-season finale at Arizona, McCarthy played his starters extensively even though he knew his team would be returning to Arizona the following week for a wild-card game. The Packers lost that post-season game 51-45 in overtime.

In the 2011 finale against the Lions, the Packers had the NFC's No. 1 seed sewn up. So McCarthy sat many of his key players, including Aaron Rodgers. Following a first-round bye, McCarthy's team looked rusty in a divisional-round loss to the eventual Super Bowl champion New York Giants at Lambeau Field.

"If you look at some of the past experiences, sitting a number of players, you have things



PHILAN M. EBENHACK/AP

Quarterback Aaron Rodgers will lead the Packers against the Lions on Sunday with the NFC North championship and a divisional-round home game at stake.

happen in the last game that are so different from the last four games before that," McCarthy said. "The fact of the matter, we're playing in a playoff-type game. I think it is exactly the way you want to go into the playoffs.

"I think it's great that Detroit and our records are the same and we're playing for the title. Yeah, I think this is exactly how you'd want it. I know it's how I'd prefer it."

McCarthy acknowledged there's a school of thought that it's better for a hot team to simply keep playing, and that a bye can stall momentum. Certainly in 2010, when the Packers won the Super Bowl as the NFC's sixth seed, taking three straight road playoff games to get there, they got on a roll. Green Bay won its final two regular-season games to qualify for the playoffs.

And last year, after Rodgers missed seven

starts with a broken left collarbone, the Packers beat the Bears at Soldier Field in the regular-season closer. That also amounted to the NFC North title game.

But to McCarthy, this setup is ideal: a playoff-style atmosphere with plenty on the line, and a chance for a week off and a home playoff game.

"I mean, byes are valuable. That's why you fight like crazy to be a No. 1 seed or a No. 2 seed," said McCarthy. "Anytime you have a chance to get that week off, I think it's important. I know some people believe in keep playing. We've done both. I think the bye is very beneficial, regardless of the outcome of the week after. It gives you a better chance to get your team ready. At the end of the day, the best preparation usually leads to a better performance."

Panthers making another strong finish

By STEVE REED

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Carolina Panthers have had another strong December push under fourth-year coach Ron Rivera to reclaim the NFC South division lead.

Yes, the 6-8-1 Panthers. Despite going more than two months without a victory this season, Carolina enters Week 17 in first place and needing a win or tie Sunday at Atlanta to repeat as division champion after climbing back into the playoff hunt with a 3-0 December.

"Believe me, I always said it — we're in it," Rivera said. "Again, I'm making no apologies for being in it."

Strong finishes have become commonplace since Rivera's arrival.

The Panthers are 14-3 in December games since Rivera took over as coach in 2011. Only Bill Belichick and the New England Patriots have a better record (15-2), according to STATS.

Rivera attributes Carolina's strong finish to incorporating younger players into the lineup late in the season, and his players



BOB LEVERONE/AP

The Panthers' Kelvin Benjamin was one of a franchise-record seven rookies to start on Sunday against the Browns.

putting in extra work on the field after practice.

"A lot of our guys stay after to do the extra things, the little things," Rivera said. "A lot of our young players do a little of those. Probably the one thing I wish is we could be better in the month of October

or late September, that's for sure."

In the midst of a seven-game winless streak, the Panthers decided to begin playing younger — and in many cases, faster — players. They got rid of veteran wide receiver Jason Avant and cornerback Antoine Cason and benched safety Thomas DeCoud.

The result is a team that looks different than the one that lined up opening day.

The Panthers started a franchise-record seven rookies on Sunday against Cleveland.

Philly Brown started alongside Kelvin Benjamin, giving the Panthers more speed at wide receiver. Guards Andrew Norwell and Trai Turner have helped shore up the offensive line.

Defensively, the Panthers start two rookies in the secondary in cornerback Bene Benwikere and Tre Boston. Rookie outside linebacker Adarius Glanton got his first start Sunday in place of the injured A.J. Klein.

"You get seven rookies on the field playing meaningful minutes at meaningful times in the game, that's a big number," Rivera said. "I thought they've all handled it well."

Offensive coordinator Mike

Shula said Rivera placed an emphasis on winning in his first season in 2011.

Rivera inherited a team that went 2-14 in the year before and the Panthers got off to a rocky 3-8 start.

Instead of writing off the season, Rivera talked about building a foundation for the future.

The Panthers, with nothing to play for, went 3-2 in December that season.

That momentum seems to have carried over.

The Panthers have won 10 of their past 11 December games, including a 17-13 victory at home against Cleveland on Sunday.

"We talked about getting used to winning in December," Shula said. "Because that is what you are going to have to do to get in the postseason."

Panthers' linebacker Luke Kuechly said the players never stopped believing they could win the division.

"We just had to tweak a couple things and by the time December rolled around, we were a team that was ready to roll," Kuechly said. "We got hot at the right time. We've just got to keep rolling now."

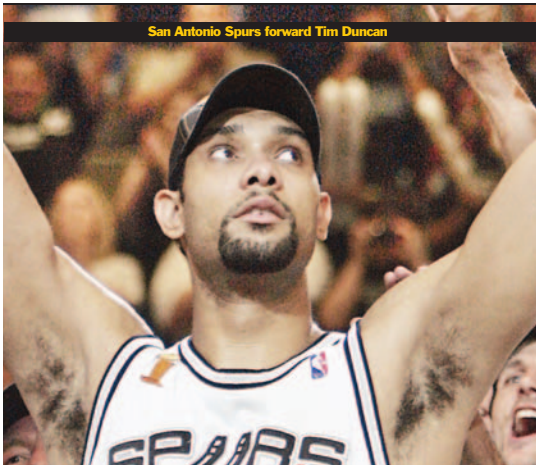
SPORTS



Befuddling Bowl

Late field goal gives Navy win
in Poinsettia Bowl | **Page 25**

San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady

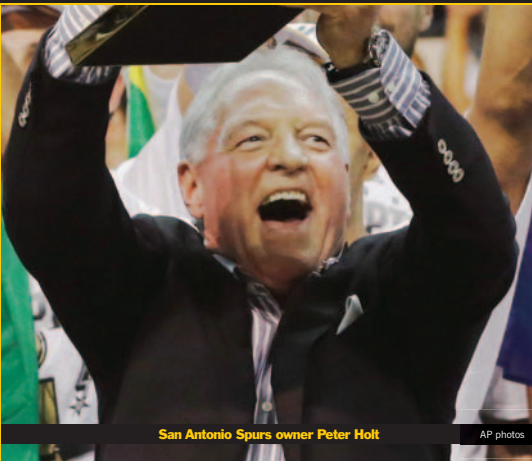


Common threads

While the Patriots and Spurs may play different sports,
each franchise has followed similar path to success | **Page 29**



New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft



San Antonio Spurs owner Peter Holt

AP photos

Kobe-less Lakers stun red-hot Warriors | **Page 28**

